DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 442 307 FL 801 382

AUTHOR	Nash, Andy, Ed.
TITLE	Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook: A Resource for Adult Educators.
INSTITUTION	World Education, Inc., Boston, MA. New England Literacy Resource Center.
SPONS AGENCY	Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation, Inc., Boston, MA.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	212p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Accountability; *Activism; Adult Education; Bilingual Education Programs; Change Strategies; Citizenship; *English (Second Language); Limited English Speaking; Political Issues; Refugees; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Social Action

ABSTRACT

This guide is a combination of very up-to-date English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) standards and curricula text and a radical, community organization and action guidebook. The guide's aim is to help people learn English so that they can participate actively in American democracy and to assert their rights and extract a larger share of power and resources from government and society as a whole. The book asserts that one of the primary purposes, historically, of adult education has been to prepare people for participation in a democracy. This might include English and civics lessons for newcomers who wanted citizenship, or literacy for emancipated slaves who faced literacy requirements erected to keep them from voting. In these situations, the vote has represented a powerful symbol of liberation and inclusion. An argument is made for more direct forms of political action and participation than voting. The ultimate aim is to present a range of tools that can help readers examine their own beliefs about community, citizenship, and democracy, to identify and analyze issues that concern them, and build skills and strategies to take informed action--in brief, to become an agent rather than a recipient of change. The book is divided into five sections: "Finding Connections to Communities and Issues"; "Holding Decision-Makers Accountable"; "Building a Community By Helping Others"; "Expressing Ourselves and Educating Others"; and "Organizing for Change." Extensive resources and references, print and Internet, and nine appendices are provided. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 442 307

Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook

A Resource for Adult Educators

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kallenbach

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

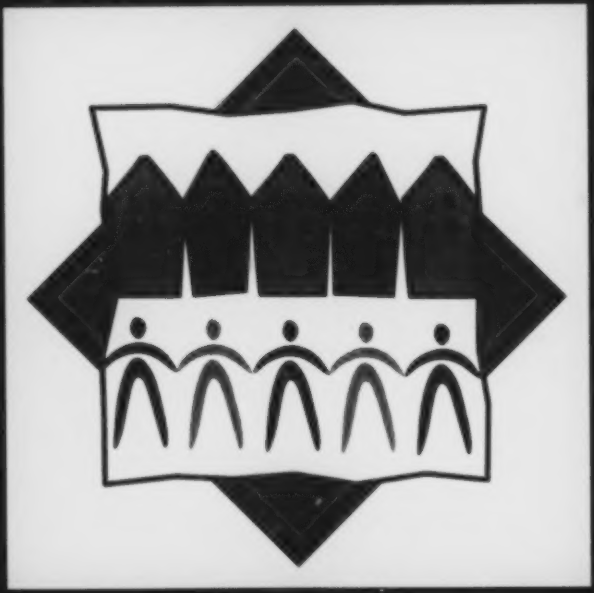
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL801382



Published by the
New England Literacy Resource Center

Edited by Andy Nash

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NCLE
4646 40th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20016-1859
RECEIVED FEB 0 2 2000

Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook

A Resource for Adult Educators

Published by the
New England Literacy Resource Center

Edited by Andy Nash

Funded by the Therese and Lincoln Filene Foundation

Copyright © 1999

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction ix

Section 1: Finding Connections to Communities and Issues

Section Introduction 3

Lessons Learned: Realities of a Community Project 5
by Amy R. Trawick
Reflections on how one class settled on reachable goals
PREP: Get on the Bus
PREP: Goal-Setting with the EFF Citizen/Community Member Role Map
PREP: Choosing an Issue to Work On

Finding the Moment 11
by Michael Blackwell and Anita Armbrister
Two GED teachers struggle to find issues that motivate students to connect learning to community
PREP: Community Mapping Activities
PREP: Mapping a Healthy Community

First Lay the Groundwork 17
by Margaret Anderson
A teacher describes the many twists and turns her class took as they tried to find a project
PREP: Paper Quilt Connections
PREP: Ways in to Thinking about Our Connections to Community
PREP: Building Community Visions
PREP: Talking about Power

Section 2: Holding Decision-Makers Accountable

Section Introduction 29

Vermont Students Win Resources and Action 31
by Carolyn Bronz and Lou Dorwaldt
A welfare to work class challenges officials to take obstacles out of their way
PREP: Researching History and Current Issues
PREP: Talking to Legislators

Pushed Too Far: Poor Women Defend Their Food Stamps 39
by Beth Bingman, based on the writings of Sharon Kimberlin
GED students take action when their food stamps are held up
    PREP: Finding Resources: Who Can Help You?
    PREP: Finding Resources: Where to Get Help in Your Town
    PREP: Finding Resources: Public Services
    PREP: Making a Phone Call

Immigrant Students Advocate for Adult Education 45
by Jonathan Leaning
A citizenship class learns civics by advocating for adult education funding
    PREP: Comparing Political Cultures
    PREP: Civic Rights and Responsibilities
    PREP: History of Voting
    PREP: Who Votes?
    PREP: Mathematics Using Election Results

Walking Students Through a Legislative Process 59
by Paul Morse
A GED teacher uses the issue of gun control to teach students about government
    PREP: Comparing Myths and Facts

"Campaigning Should Always Be Like This" 65
by Wendy Quiñones
Careful preparation helps students get the most from a legislator's visit
    PREP: Learning About Candidates
    PREP: Interviewing Tips

The "Clinic": A Community Organizes in Philadelphia 71
by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Philadelphia
Students meet with local police to challenge their approach to controlling drug traffic
    PREP: Strategies for Influencing Others
    PREP: Participating in Public Forums

Dialogue Day: Teens Have Their Say 75
by Stephanie Menard
Not included in a school-sponsored dialogue, a group of "early leavers" make their ideas known
    PREP: From Grievances to Proposals

Section 3: Building Community by Helping Others

Section Introduction 81

Helping Neighbors in a Crisis 83
by Silja Kallenbach, based on the writings of Maggie Moreno
An ESOL class uses their culture of community to help a family recover from crisis
    PREP: Making an Action Plan
    PREP: Budgeting Resources

Prejudice in a Small Town 89
by Douglas Griffith
In the face of cruel prejudice, a resident decides to speak up
PREP: Who Are You?
PREP: Personal Cultural History
PREP: Counteracting Stereotypes
PREP: Conflict Resolution Skills: Turning Down the Heat on Arguments
PREP: Five Principles for Resolving Conflicts
PREP: Communication Skills Activity

Section 4: Expressing Ourselves and Educating Others

Section Introduction 101

Investigating AIDS and Taking Action 103
by Rachel Martin
Residents write community education materials that address questions not being answered elsewhere
PREP: Critiquing Educational Materials

Saying What is True: Women Speak Out Against Domestic Violence 109
by Judy Hofer
When domestic violence surfaces as a common problem, a support group forms and takes action
PREP: Participatory Action Spiral
PREP: Working in Groups
PREP: How Do I Work Across Differences?

Women Create Knowledge: Participatory Action Research and Breast Cancer 117
Based on the writings from "Who Holds the Mirror? The Mural, Oral Histories and Pedagogy of the Breast Cancer Oral History Action Project" by Beth Sauerhaft and Marty Williams
A diverse group of women meet to learn and educate about breast cancer, the environment, and power
PREP: Assessing Your Listening Ability
PREP: Listening Techniques

Project Hope Students Teach Others about Welfare Reform 121
by Lorna Rivera
Formerly homeless women study the history of welfare policy and then teach others about the issue
PREP: Helping Others Learn
PREP: Whose Point of View?
PREP: Framing the Issues

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities 129
by Deborah L. Johnson
A group of students decide to impact local youth by sharing their experiences at the middle school
PREP: Writing Survey Questions
PREP: Analyzing Survey Data

Section 5: Organizing for Change

Section Introduction 139

Don't Take "No" for an Answer: A Poor Neighborhood Organizes 141
by Brenda Bell and Elnora Yarborough
A poor community organizes for a school bus stop and then a paved road
PREP: Asking the Right Questions
PREP: Applying the Right Question Process
PREP: New Bedford Students Ask Questions about the Economy

Transportation on the Move! 149
by Pat Larson, Cindy Rodriguez, Caridad Santiago, Donna Swain, and Lisa Willard, with an overview by Cindy Rodriguez
Students research and spearhead efforts to bring public transportation to their rural community
PREP: Timelines
PREP: Timeline Activities
PREP: Tips for Effective Meetings
PREP: Group Communication Patterns
PREP: Dealing with Difficult Dynamics
PREP: Balancing the Participation

Light in Montana: How One Town Said No to Hate 165
Jo Clare Hartsig and Walter Wink
After several incidents of violence, hundreds organize for peace and tolerance
PREP: Stereotypes in the Media
PREP: Forming Opinions about Controversial Issues

Resources

Webliography 173
Cited References 177
Additional Resources 181

Appendices

Appendix A: Human Rights 185
Appendix B: The Economic Bill of Rights 187
Appendix C: The Bill of Rights for Adult Basic Education Students 189
Appendix D: Rhode Island Student Bill of Rights 191
Appendix E: When Did We Come to the U.S.? 193
Appendix F: Rights of All Immigrants 195
Appendix G: Rules on Political Activity 197
Appendix H: Joining Together 199
Appendix I: Illustrations 201

Acknowledgements

We thank the following contributors, who made this project possible:

The authors, and the groups they worked with, for inspiring us with their accounts of community commitment, civic responsibility, and social action.

Our official and unofficial advisors, who reminded us of our priorities: Margaret Anderson, Steve Bender, Janet Kaplan Bucciarelli, Debbie Johnson, Janet Isserlis, Wendy Quiñones, Lorna Rivera, and Cara Streck.

The reviewers of our working draft, who gave us direct and insightful feedback:
New Hampshire: Anne Burnett, Art Ellison, Debbie Liskow, Connie Mirski, Pat Nelson, and Denise Reddington
Vermont: Rick Boyle, Stefani Crouse, Cindy Holden, Stephanie Menard, Edward Pirie, Chuck Poston, Lynn Root, Wendy Ross, and Nancy Sherman
Rhode Island: Terri Coustan, Denise DiMarzio, Nancy Fritz, Sally Gabb, and Elizabeth Meaney

The Northeast SABES Citizenship Work Group
The NELRC Political and Economic Literacy Work Group

The colleagues who turned an unruly list of ideas into a coherent and accessible resource:
Parker Holmes for proofreading and copy-editing;
Marie Horchler for design, layout, and production;
Silja Kallenbach for support and review of all phases of the project; and
Joann Wheeler for illustrations.

And special thanks to the Therese and Lincoln Filene Foundation for their generous support to develop, produce, and disseminate this work.

Introduction

What we mean by civic participation

One of the primary purposes, historically, of adult education has been to prepare people for participation in a democracy. This might include English and civics lessons for newcomers who wanted citizenship, or literacy for emancipated slaves who faced literacy requirements quickly erected to keep them from voting. In these situations, the vote has represented a powerful symbol of liberation and inclusion.

We believe, however, that to really have a voice in the decisions that affect our lives, we need to go beyond voting to more direct forms of participation, such as community education, advocacy and organizing. We also need, in a culture that celebrates the individual and the myth of the equal playing field, to recognize our interdependence, and acknowledge and address our inequalities. Building community, in this way, is one aspect of civic participation.

This sourcebook aims to reflect these many dimensions of civic and community involvement. Its purpose is to present a range of tools that can help readers examine their own beliefs about community, citizenship, democracy, etc.; identify and analyze issues that concern them; and build skills and strategies to take informed action. We encourage readers to compare the goals and assumptions of the various models of civic participation, and to make choices about when, why and how they might use each of them.

Many adults are already active in their communities in a number of ways, and have honed many of the skills of participation. This resource helps them build on their knowledge in preparation for new experiences of activism. But we have also found that adults seldom describe *themselves* as active in their communities, which reminds us that we need to start by talking about what these terms mean to each of us.

When we surveyed workshop participants about what civic participation meant to them, their answers included:

- Exercising a voice in how your community operates
- Following what people do once they are elected
- Awareness, being heard, action
- Start by being a good neighbor; a sense of belonging is a start
- Coming together on many levels to be engaged in public issues and community life
- Being able to navigate and influence systems and policies
- Learning about community history
- Becoming an agent (rather than recipient) of change

Clearly, there are many takes on what civic participation means, and this sourcebook has been written to be inclusive of these differing points of view.

Past Lessons and Influences

The sourcebook builds on the work of many past efforts to prepare people to participate in the decisions of their communities. The most immediate influences are the writings of Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois (described below), and two projects that have explored the potential for integrating adult education with community involvement.

The Voter Education, Registration, and Action (VERA) Project
In 1998, the New England Literacy Resource Center convened four teams of practitioners in three states that met for on-going discussion and sharing about their efforts to incorporate community involvement projects into their teaching. The data from that classroom research taught us that what adult students need in order to become engaged in such projects is:

- A personal connection to a community or an issue;
- Role models that remind them that change is possible and help them recognize their ability to contribute to that change;
- Skills (research, critical reflection, advocacy, etc.) that prepare them to take informed action;
- A clear connection to their academic goals;
- A sense of community within the group; and
- Rehearsal of unfamiliar interactions (interviews, phone calls, meetings, etc.)

These findings have informed the overall contents of the book.

Equipped for the Future (EFF)
EFF is a national initiative to help adults meet four fundamental purposes for adult education (access to information, voice, independent action, and bridge to the future) and to build consensus around what adults need to know and be able to do as workers, family members, and community members. Diverse groups have come together to describe the activities that are key for each role. The community member role map (page 9) is a result of that consensus-building, and can be a starting point for discussion about the ways that people might want to be active in their communities. The full EFF framework includes tools that can help adults map out what they want to be able to do and the skills they need to get there. And it builds awareness of how their abilities transfer from role to role.

We have found the EFF tools useful for helping students see the direct relationship between real life activities and the development of academic skills. Without this connection, community concerns seem peripheral to what most adults see as the primary purposes of their education. EFF also names, through its "Common Activities," the areas of activity that are essential in all three roles ("Work Together," for example) so that students are able to see the transferability of what they are learning to other contexts. This is particularly important given the current educational emphasis on work (getting it, keeping it, etc.), and the need to demonstrate that what adults learn about participation in the community will be applicable to their work and other life goals. In the text, each section opens with a list of transferable activities and skills that are addressed in that chapter.

The Ten Arts of Democracy
In "The Quickening of America" by Frances Moore-Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois, the authors outline ten myths that undermine the notion that we have the power and ability to solve community problems. They also offer strategies for counteracting these myths. They call these "The Ten Arts of Democracy," which deal largely with the ability to listen to one another and work across our differences. The "Ten Arts" have informed the development of this sourcebook by reminding us to address the many interpersonal elements that make collective action, education, advocacy, and self-discovery possible. We invite you, also, to consider what it might mean to think of these skills and abilities as "arts."

Ten Arts of Democracy

Art One:
Active Listening – encouraging the speaker and searching for meaning

Art Two:
Creative Conflict – confronting others in ways that produce growth

Art Three:
Mediation – facilitating interaction to help people in conflict hear each other

Art Four:
Negotiation – problem solving that meets some key interests of all involved

Art Five:
Political imagination – reimaging our futures according to our values

Art Six:
Public dialogue – public talk on matters that concern us all

Art Seven:
Public judgement – public decision making that allows citizens to make choices they are willing to help implement

Art Eight:
Celebration and appreciation – expressing joy and appreciation for what we learn as well as what we achieve

Art Nine:
Evaluation and reflection – assessing and incorporating the lessons we learn through action

Art Ten:
Mentoring – supportively guiding others in learning these arts of public life

Reprinted with permission from Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois, *The Quickening of America*. Copyright © 1994 Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104 (800) 956-7739

What's Here and Why

The intent of the sourcebook is to develop greater capacity for community participation and informed action. These are both grounded in critical inquiry about specific issues and their social and historical contexts, our own priorities, and our options for making change. The sourcebook supports this inquiry by providing two kinds of tools. One is a collection of narrative accounts (written mostly by teachers) of past community education and action projects – predecessors we can learn from. The other is an array of "prep and practice" activities that focus on skill- and confidence-building, particularly in the areas of reflection, analysis, research, and communication.

Very few of these pieces were written specifically for the sourcebook. Most were gathered from past issues of *The Change Agent* (a publication of the NELRC), or excerpted from other curricula and project documents. Because this is mostly a compilation of what already exists and what we know about, there are bound to be gaps and imbalances in what is represented. The pieces also vary in focus, level of detail, and intended audience. They need to be approached as models that can be adapted for particular teaching contexts. We hope you will see this variety as a strength, as it introduces you to a wide range of related resources that can be used to dig more deeply into each specialty area. It also introduces you to teachers and students whose experiences, we hope, guide and encourage you in your own work.

The text is organized into five sections. The first section addresses, head on, the challenge of integrating any kind of civic participation with the adult education curriculum. The remaining four sections focus on the more successful aspects of projects carried out in diverse settings. Along with acknowledging the barriers that make such projects difficult, we wanted to highlight the real possibilities that exist, and the strategies educators have used to bring civic participation into the adult education context.

Within the sections, each narrative is accompanied by prep and practice activities that build some of the essential skills and knowledge needed to take similar action. Some skills – listening, for example - are key to every story although the activities only appear in one place. In fact, most of these skills are transferable from one form of civic participation to another, and beyond. What brings these prep and practice activities to life are the stories of lived experience that we hope will motivate others to their own creative action. Enjoy and share the stories.

Challenges and Strategies to Implementing Civic Participation Projects

Challenges	Strategies
Students are cynical about community action or have difficulty imagining what taking action means (see Anderson).	• Read about what other classes have done, or about community members who have made a difference. • Design an initial project in which you take more ownership, letting go as students become interested. • Explore the root causes of cynicism.
There's difficulty recruiting interested students (see Blackwell and Armbrister).	• Build on issues people care about. • Give students real control and decision making power. • Link project work to their goals. • Provide options for various kinds of participation (or non-participation). • Listen for why something isn't working and be ready to adapt. • Let go of a project if it isn't working.
It's hard to balance the need for specific skills development (GED, etc.) with the project (see Trawick).	• Schedule times for both group project work and individual skill development. • Integrate skill development and academics into projects. • Make explicit the ways in which projects are developing skills. • Make decisions about the project during class time, but invite students to join you after class hours to work on the time consuming aspects of the project.
Teacher has preconceived or ambitious notions of what kind of project or product students should come up with.	• Accept that it doesn't have to be perfect. • Be clear with yourself and participants about your goals for the project (creating a perfect publication or allowing students to practice skills?) Know which areas are important to you and let go of others. • Let go of your own notions about what action is, and what timeframe it should happen on.
Students are not ready to take action in the community (see Anderson, Blackwell, and Armbrister).	• Work on the building blocks of action. • Allow students to have different levels of involvement, and for those levels to change as students' needs change.

Challenges	**Strategies**
Teacher feels that students' choices (about action to take or topics to study) are inappropriate or overly ambitious. For example, a group studying nonviolent social action decides to take over a building to protest an issue (see Trawick).	• Help participants think through the preparation they need and the implications of their actions. • Invite guest speakers who have taken similar actions to talk about the reality of what students are planning. • As a class, narrow the goals down to make them more realistic. • Know your own limits and the policies of your program. Make these limits clear before the project begins. • Slow down the pace of the project. • Integrate volunteers into the project. • Link up with other community groups who may be interested in taking on a piece of the project . • Seek out the support of others who are doing similar work. • Break down the project into a series of smaller steps.
Student attendance is inconsistent (see Anderson).	• Keep your sense of humor. • Allow for projects which people can pick up and put down as needed. • Let newcomers jump in as they become interested. • Allow for individualized work.
Teacher feels that teens are not interested in community issues (see Menard).	• Listen carefully for the issues that are of concern to teens. • Introduce writings by teens that raise civic community issues.
One-on-one structure doesn't allow for group building.	• Create special events on a regular basis to bring individuals together. • Introduce examples of individual action.
The topic or action becomes very emotional (see Johnson, Anderson).	• Seek outside help, for individual referrals and for guidance about working through it as a group. • Learn what resources in the community can provide assistance (e.g. a women's shelter, crisis line, etc.). • Take a break for several days or weeks. • Consider refocusing the project on less emotional aspects of the issue. • Give individuals freedom to change their role. • Don't be afraid to drop it all together if it's too much to handle.

This chart was contributed by Margaret Anderson.

Section I

Finding Connections to Communities and Issues

Section Introduction

Lessons Learned: Realities of a Community Project

Finding the Moment

First Lay the Groundwork

Section I: Introduction

It is no simple matter to integrate community involvement into an educational process that students usually associate with their individual improvement. The accounts in this section describe the efforts of four teachers who are using community action projects as real life contexts for their teaching. In each case, the practitioners face similar challenges in getting projects started – deeply held beliefs that things can't change, unrealistic expectations of what a small group can accomplish, difficulty seeing the immediate connection between these projects and academics, among others. The pieces here describe the strategies educators used to make every one of these challenges a "teachable moment."

The "prep and practice" activities in the section offer a dozen ways to explore the meaning of community, discuss our social roles and relationships, and envision the world we would like to live in. We have found them to be useful starting points for adults who may have a wide range of experiences and interests in community life. The activities acknowledge these life experiences but also nudge people to look at their experiences in new ways.

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you review this section:

1. Why introduce community connections and participation into the classroom if students' priorities are related to work and family?
2. What does it mean to develop a community vision or a community project when students often come from a variety of different communities?
3. Is community engagement a goal of adult education? What about people who do not want to identify with community (preferring to focus on self-interest) or who feel that, "This is not my country."?

The examples in this section draw primarily upon the following skills and activities.

EFF Common Activities

✓ Gather, Analyze, and Use Information
___ Manage Resources
___ Work Within the Big Picture
___ Work Together
___ Provide Leadership
___ Guide and Support Others
___ Seek Guidance and Support from Others
✓ Develop and Express Sense of Self
✓ Respect Others and Value Diversity
___ Exercise Rights and Responsibilities
✓ Create and Pursue Vision and Goals
___ Use Technology & Other Tools to Accomplish Goals
___ Keep Pace with Change

EFF Skills

Communication Skills

✓ Read with Understanding
✓ Convey Ideas in Writing
✓ Speak So Others Can Understand
✓ Listen Actively
✓ Observe Critically

Decision Making Skills

___ Use Math to Solve Problems & Communicate
___ Solve Problems and Make Decisions
___ Plan

Interpersonal Skills

___ Cooperate with Others
___ Advocate and Influence
___ Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
___ Guide Others

Lifelong Learning Skills

___ Take Responsibility for Learning
✓ Reflect and Evaluate
✓ Learn through Research
___ Use Information & Communication Technology

Lessons Learned:

Realities of a Community Project

by Amy R. Trawick

SHELTER 4 ALL
WEL-COME ALL
Dear Senator,
The homeless in my city need help. Please give your support to fund shelters.

Martha waited until our class discussion had died down and then asked, rather amazed, "You mean we're really going to do something about this?" We were talking about homelessness in our community. We were talking about big problems. We had been talking about them for days.

I remember being dumbfounded by my student's question. I thought it was clear to everyone why we had been looking at our town under a microscope for what amounted to several weeks. I had told the students we would be participating in a national study to figure out what we would need to work on (skills, knowledge) in order to be active in our communities. And yet, Martha was asking if we were really going to do something about the homelessness problem in Pulaski, Virginia, as if she couldn't imagine that she or we could *possibly* do anything, but she was vastly intrigued that we *might*. In retrospect, I am now able to make sense of Martha's response and other issues that developed for me as part of my class's participation in this community project last spring.

Communication Is Key

One of the many pitfalls I stumbled into during the community project process was assuming that, at any given time, everyone in the class was at the same place – that each member understood where I and everyone else was coming from. For example, when talking about the problem of homelessness in the community, it turned out that not everyone was thinking about it in the same way. After much discussion and research, we discovered that the real concern for many of the students was, in fact, inadequate low-income housing. Very few people in our community actually live on the streets, but a disturbingly large number of our class's families and friends live in overcrowded, substandard housing. Some members of the class had meant that all along, while others had thought we were talking about people living under bridges.

For us, we had to "dialogue" at length to get to the real issue. It was only after we had discussed, written, drawn pictures, researched, and talked some more that we finally identified our issue of inadequate housing. Looking back, I realize that offering as many opportunities to communicate as possible, in as many different modes as possible, was vital in helping the class focus on a target issue.

It occurs to me now that Martha had no schema, no prior knowledge of how a group went about taking action in the community. As a teacher, I could come up with a zillion issues to address and a zillion and one ways to address them. But it was only by immersing Martha in these many classroom conversations, and in the process of taking action, that she was able to understand what taking action could mean.

Be Patient with Yourself

In *Making Meaning, Making Change*, Elsa Auerbach suggests that involving students meaningfully in participatory curriculum development is a "slow, gradual process which involves moving back and forth between old and new ways of doing things." Since a community project is heavily participatory and, usually, a new way of "schooling" for both teachers and students, Auerbach's advice is appropriate.

While this project forced me out of my comfort zone, I found it necessary at times to give myself permission to fall back into old ways of doing things. Although I felt guilty moving back and forth like this, it's what kept me afloat throughout. Similarly, students seemed to thrive on community project activities for periods of time but were easily overwhelmed by the process and were seduced by the familiarity of their textbooks.

My journal entries record other frustrations I had with my role as facilitator. Philosophically, I believe in the importance of modeling a democratic environment in my classroom, yet I found myself giving in to the temptation to make decisions for the class in order to get things rolling. Part of my difficulty was that I didn't feel I had *time* to do everything democratically. But another part of my concern was the real time constraints imposed on me by the students. Some were close to taking the GED tests and wanted a significant portion of the class sessions focused on pure academics. This balancing of "school stuff" with "community stuff" haunted me throughout the project, and although I could see a way through at times, I never seemed to be able to connect the two well.

In hindsight, I think I did okay. But first I had to stop bemoaning the fact that I did not know how to do everything I wanted to do. I had to give myself permission to be a learner too.

Think Realistically

At one point, the class was enthusiastic about the idea of creating a shelter for the homeless. A major problem was that a shelter was not a solution to the problem the class had identified – inadequate housing. It was big and tangible, however, and it was something that would make us feel like we had really made a difference.

Our discussion of the shelter brought up two important points for me. The first was the inability of many in the class to foresee consequences and long-term needs. Who would actually staff the shelter every night? What would happen when students' individual goals were met and they left the class, or when their initial enthusiasm waned? Who would take over running the shelter? According to the students, the answer to many of the questions was . . . me, the teacher. Which brings me to my second point: I, as the teacher – but also as a mother, wife, church member, and individual – had to set boundaries for what I could realistically commit to. I told the class that I was willing to be part of the group but that I was not willing to take on the majority of the work for what could be years. I encouraged the class to keep their other life roles in mind and to think realistically about what they were willing to commit to.

After refocusing on the problem they had identified and considering the amount of time and energy they could realistically offer, the students ultimately decided to write class letters to decision-makers at various levels of government to address their concern about the lack of low-income housing in our community. This action component, though important and meaningful for the class was, for me, rather anticlimactic. What I found most profound were the group dynamics, the negotiation – in essence, the true community within a classroom that developed as we worked on our project. I came away with a new appreciation for how providing opportunities like this in the classroom can enhance the quality of learning and, consequently, the quality of living for students in our programs.

Amy Trawick is Assistant Coordinator of the Office of Adult Education at the New River Community College in Dublin, VA and was an EFF Inquiry teacher in 1998. This article is reprinted with permission from *The Change Agent*, Issue 6, February 1998 and the author.

18

PREP AND PRACTICE

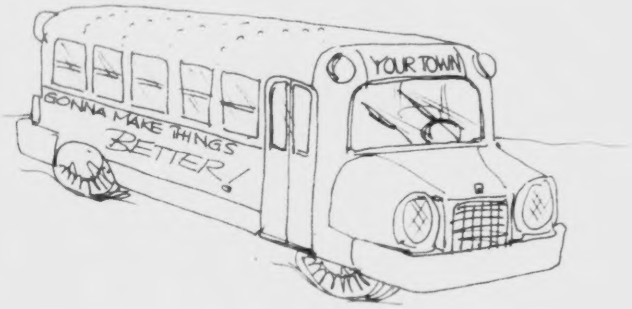
Get on the Bus

This is an activity that invites people to think about the larger purposes for being active in their communities. Bigger than any particular goal, it asks people to think about the "bus" as a journey somewhere – perhaps toward participatory democracy. To begin, you need to set the stage. You might say something like this . . .

I want you to imagine a bus. The bus is community involvement, and civic participation, and citizenship. A lot of you – maybe all of you – are on board that bus in some way. You've already gotten on. We're going to spend the next half hour or so talking about that bus. So first picture it. Imagine that you're on the bus. Now think about why you would get on this bus? Why would you come out of your front door and go beyond your family and work responsibilities to get on this bus?

Document people's answers for class reading and for sharing with future groups. Continue the discussion with these (and your own) questions:

- Where is the bus heading? What kind of world do we want?
- What do we need to learn to get there?
- What are the potholes and roadblocks?
- How do we make it through the rough spots?



PREP AND PRACTICE

Goal-Setting with the EFF Citizen/ Community Member Role Map

The "Equipped for the Future" Citizen/Community Member Role Map is a description of the things that effective community members know how to do. It was created by hundreds of people who, themselves, are community activists. The map can be useful for helping adults examine their experience and strengths, and for identifying areas in which they'd like to develop further.

1. Before looking at the role map, ask the group what they think a "Citizen/ Community Member Role Map" is. After some predictions, you might explain it as a description of the things that active community members know how to do

2. Brainstorm a list of thoughts on what effective community members do. Sort the list into categories and give them titles (make your own "map").

3. Based on your map, talk with a partner or small group about the activities that are your strengths.

4. Write about an example of one of your strengths, or about how you learned to do the activities you are strong in.

5. Look at the role map. To break it down into manageable chunks, you can:
   - Discuss the four section titles: Are these the right ones? What might be in them?
   - Have four groups each take one of the sections to read and report on.
   - Cut the map apart and put all the bulleted items in a hat. Students pull items out, one at a time, and decide which category that item belongs under.

6. Compare your map to the EFF map; revise your map if you want to. ESOL beginners, especially, might prefer to make their map with pictures.

7. Compare the abilities you need, here and now, to the abilities needed in your parents' generation, or in your place of origin.

Then ask the group to see if they can find any activities on the map that they would like to be able to do better, and for what purpose. If there is consensus, these could become class goals.

Citizen/Community Member Role Map

Effective citizens and community members take informed action to make a positive difference in their lives, communities, and world.

BROAD AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

	Become and Stay Informed	**Form and Express Opinions and Ideas**	**Work Together**	**Take Action to Strengthen Communities**
	Citizens and community members find and use information to identify and solve problems and contribute to the community	*Citizens and community members develop a personal voice and use it individually and as a group*	*Citizens and community members interact with other people to get things done towards a common purpose*	*Citizens and community members exercise their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups to improve the world around them*
KEY ACTIVITIES	• Identify, monitor, and anticipate problems, community needs, strengths, and resources, for yourself and others • Recognize and understand human, legal, and civic rights and responsibilities, for yourself and others • Figure out how the system that affects an issue works • Identify how to have an impact and recognize that individuals can make a difference • Find, interpret, analyze, and use diverse sources of information, including personal experience	• Strengthen and express sense of self that reflects personal history, values, beliefs, and roles in the larger community • Learn from others' experiences and ideas • Communicate so that others understand • Reflect on and reevaluate your own opinions and ideas	• Get involved in the community and get others involved • Respect others and work to eliminate discrimination and prejudice • Define common values, visions, and goals • Manage and resolve conflict • Participate in group processes and decision making	• Help yourself and others • Educate others • Influence decision makers and hold them accountable • Provide leadership within the community

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY Revised - 3/29/99

PREP AND PRACTICE

Choosing an Issue to Work On

After you have drawn out the issues that concern people, the group needs to figure out which one they want to work on. Here are some activities that can help to focus the group.

1. **Categorizing/clustering**
   Put all the issues or ideas on post-its (one idea per stickie) and stick them all on a wall or a table. As a group or in pairs, have people make clusters of items they see as related, and then label the category. (Some facilitators like to lead this activity in silence to encourage more equal participation.) To debrief, have people talk about how they made sense of the items and the relationships they saw among them. Since there are usually many ways to categorize things, this invites discussion about the different ways people see the world. By creating categories, it also helps to narrow the number of issues the group will choose from.

2. **Prioritizing**
   One popular way to prioritize issues is by dot voting. In contrast to simple voting, where each person only votes for one choice, dot voting gives each person several votes and allows them to distribute their votes, evenly or unevenly, across the choices. This allows people to weight their support for the options. So if we all get three dots, I can give one dot to three separate issues, or I can give all my dots to one issue that I feel strongly about.

3. **Focusing your topic**
   Before making the final selection of an issue to work on, you might want to think about the size of the issues you're considering. Are they so big that it will be difficult to do anything about them? To figure out if the issues need more focus, try to answer these questions:

   - How is this issue a concern in our daily lives?
   - What change do we want to see?
   - What could we possibly do?
   - What would action look like?

Finding the Moment

by Michael Blackwell and Anita Armbrister

In this GED class, in the Appalachian town of Ivanhoe, Virginia, we had struggled for a long time to find a structure and a practice that would enable us and the students to use topics from the outside world. It seems that, from a community education perspective, people working in places with a clear and well-defined crisis (bad water, hazardous materials, etc.) actually might have an easier time educating around the given issue. In a place like Ivanhoe, where the crisis is slow-burning and hard to point a finger at, it can be hard to engage people in using community issues.

We had not been able to interest students in departing much from a prescribed course of learning, one particularly geared towards the students' attainment of their GED. We had some success in getting topics and beefs on the table, but we couldn't do two things: 1) convert concern on the part of students and teachers over an issue into a solid chance to acquire skills, and 2) sustain interest in a topic for the amount of time it took to begin to make meaning and sense.

"Topic of the Month" seemed to help this out a lot. We figured that if we had one three hour class per week, and spent one hour on math and one hour on another focused GED topic (science, social studies, etc.), then we could spend the third hour of each week on a new topic, and use that topic to really utilize the chance to develop people's literacy skills in the broadest sense of learning how to make meaning and take action on issues of importance to the learner.

One thing we had found was that people had difficulty in handling a broad question like "What do you want to learn about now?" We also knew that the really crucial element for student input and determination of these topics was for them to feel confident that their concerns would be taken seriously. So we took an opportunity to utilize an experience that was fast approaching, and gave them the chance to get involved. Then, after they expressed interest and approval, we took great pains to join with them to define what we wanted to learn and how we wanted to do it.

The event that we prepared for was a week-long visit by a group of community practitioners from Mali, Africa. The beauty of it was that the experience was of a type that people were very skilled at: the receiving of guests. Anita and I broke the whole issue into two basic parts and our group of seven students took it from there. We asked, "What do you want these people to learn about you?" and "What do you want to learn about them?" We spent the next five weeks inductively learning what culture is through exploring our own history. By trying to figure out what would be important to them, we discovered what was important to us, and why. What different aspects of our culture did we want them to know about? Did we want them to see everything, warts and all? What are some of those warts anyway? What are our strengths, what are we proud of? These are the questions we asked ourselves. By having the students pose their own questions, they were able to take a good, critical, analytic view of things, without prodding and in a way that we had never heard before.

Briefly let us describe the things the students did. The morning class decided on a tour of the Ivanhoe area. We sat down and brainstormed what places in Ivanhoe were important and why. We asked some of the older people in the community to go around with us and tell us what they knew. The students themselves also had a lot to say about their town.

The tour was a huge success, and the morning students and the old folks all came back that evening for a community potluck supper. We ended up talking till the Malians were ready to drop. We had the first public dialogue about culture and racism heard here in years. We talked about ways of life, families, women's issues, everything, and much of the conversation grew from the questions and short presentations that the evening class had formulated themselves. The students were enraptured, and it stimulated topics for a month.

Each person wrote up their opinions and reflections of the event. The writing went through several rounds of peer editing and revision, so that by the time the program's pieces made it into the newsletter, they were strong.

When this experience began winding down, we asked if there were any topics on our minds that we might want to get into and learn a little about. One of the women who had taken the lead in the Mali experience thought about five seconds and said, "I want to learn about NAFTA." This was three weeks before the vote. We asked everyone if that was ok, they agreed, and off we went. The students ventured what aspects they wanted to know about, and we brainstormed ways that we could gather the information we desired. The students went out and gathered the information from newspapers, TV, friends, family and co-workers and studied the issue. We didn't have quite enough time to take action on the issue before the vote, unfortunately, but the project helped us begin a tradition of student-initiated topics and methods. This is something we've struggled to do for years, and it's tremendously exciting to see it finally happening.

Excerpted with permission from *Community in the Classroom Project: Final Report to the Association for Community Based Education (ACBE)*, 1993.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Community Mapping Activities

Individual Maps
Ask each individual to make a community map starting with his or her own home. The map should include all the places each person visits within a week and any other significant community spots he or she can think of. Before having the group share their maps, ask individuals to look at their own maps with these questions in mind:

- What strikes you about your map?
- What do you notice is important to you? (For example, one person noticed that her map highlighted her friends' homes and hardly touched on other kinds of places; another person noticed how geographically limited his daily world was.)

Then have the group discuss the maps:

- What do the students' maps have in common?
- What is left out? (Copying the maps on overheads facilitates this discussion.)

Group Maps
Break into small groups of 4-5 and ask each group to draw a map of their community. It should include all important institutions, resources, community gathering places, workplaces and their own residences. The group can also indicate where the sources of power are within their community by showing where decisions are made and where people who make the decisions live. These maps can be illustrated with drawings or with photographs taken or collected by the group.

Group Photo Story
Break into teams of 6-8. Divide the community up into sections for each team to cover. Instruct each team to ride or walk the streets in their community section, making their own map of the businesses, institutions, residences, parks, etc. Put down everything that catches your attention. Use a camera to record and document as you go. After each team has visited their section of the community, ask group members to talk about what they discovered.

- What did they see that they had never noticed before?
- What strengths and problems did they find?
- What new resources did they discover?

Before they report back to the whole group, ask them to show everyone the photos they took.

- What story does the group see in those pictures?
- How does it compare with what they then hear from the reporters?

PREP AND PRACTICE

Community Scavenger Hunt

Make a list of items for students to "hunt" individually, in pair or teams. Whoever collects all required information first wins the scavenger hunt. Ideas that teachers could customize for the local community or neighborhood include:

- Brochure from a local health center
- Interest rate on a checking account at a local bank
- The hours of the local library and whether and when they have a children's hour
- Three ways to get the local newspaper
- Schedule of events sponsored by a local public school
- Instructions for where to pay a parking ticket
- Where and how to register to vote
- Hours of the local dump or recycling information
- Information from a historical monument
- Free admission days and times at a local museum, zoo etc.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Mapping a Healthy Community

by Lindy Whiton

Possible Context for Activity

This activity can be used to help students begin to focus on understanding the systems that create community and government. It also helps students begin to understand that they do have some power in defining their own communities. This opens up the discussion about what people would like to change about their communities and gives them some ideas about where they would like to see change and how that change might be helped. These are two activities that are best done in the context of a larger curriculum on civic participation in a healthy community.

Objectives

- To begin discussions on what makes a healthy community, where people would like to live with their families.
- To create a mural illustrating the group's ideas about a healthy community.

Activity

- Discussion: What defines community? What is community for you?
- Brainstorm idea of "healthy" community. What makes something healthy? List the ideas on a flip chart.
- Once learners feel comfortable with their ideas, ask them to draw their ideas together on large mural paper. Have on hand old magazines from which students can cut pictures to compliment their own drawings and words. Let drawing last for a while. Even if it slows down, people talk and add more ideas as they go on. Participants draw a tabletop-sized map of their fantasy community and display it.
- Freewrite: In order for our community to stay healthy, we need ________.
- Create 5 statements taken from the previous discussion such as:
  To create a healthy community, you have to know what an unhealthy community is.
  To create a healthy community, you have to have a government.
- Make 3 signs with AGREE, DISAGREE, and MAYBE written on them.
- Read the statement, and ask the group to stand under the sign that represents what they think of the statement. Ask people to discuss their opinions. Read the next statement and ask people to move and then discuss. Do this for all 5 statements.
- Write down the issues that emerge.
- Keep a vocabulary list of any unknown words. These should be defined and hung up on the wall.
- Freewrite: Write about an issue that emerged for you during this discussion.

Lindy Whiton, Ed.D., has been involved in the field of adult education for the past 16 years and has been focusing on economic and political curricula for literacy programs. This activity was adapted with permission from *The Change Agent, Issue 6, February 1998* and the author.

First Lay the Groundwork

by Margaret Anderson

In the spring of 1998, I participated in the Voter Education, Registration, and Action (VERA) Teacher Inquiry Project, a project of New England Literacy Resource Center. The goal of the inquiry project was to support teachers who were doing civic participation projects that integrated adult education with community action. The VERA teachers kept journals of what happened in the classroom and met once a month to talk about what we were seeing.

I taught a mixed level (ABE/GED) reading and writing class at the Northampton classroom of The Literacy Project, an adult basic education program in western Massachusetts. We met twice a week for 2 ½ hours per class. On the first day of class, we started with a brainstorm about the community issues that members of the class were concerned about. I was impressed by the broad range of issues that these learners were interested in, and their consciousness of how interconnected the issues are. The conversation was exciting to me because they listed many of the issues that I care most about: poverty and the rising cost of living, housing and homelessness, sanity and insanity (and who decides which is which), the growing prison population, crime and violence, laws and who makes them, racism, power and powerlessness. The topics were rich and important; the challenge was going to be to narrow it down to something manageable – and create some kind of action project around it!

Since the class already saw these issues as interconnected, I was reluctant to ask them to vote or simply choose one theme to cover. I really wanted to capture that sense of interconnection, so I tried the technique of "affinity grouping." I wrote the themes they had identified on index cards and asked the students to group the cards into categories. They came up with four themes: the distribution of wealth, mental health, crime and violence, and social action and protest. One student saw a way to link them all together: "You grow up poor. You can't afford to go to school. So, you don't have any options for jobs. You can't make enough money, so you lose your housing. Then, you have a choice. Either you go insane, turn to crime, or you take some kind of action." It made perfect sense to me, and better yet, it set the stage for taking action.

Besides the clever analysis of that one student, what held these themes together was the Northampton State Hospital. Like other state mental hospitals, its gothic buildings and stately grounds stand on a hill above town, dark and silent. It held significance for everyone in the class; everyone knew someone who had either worked there or been a patient there, and many of us had a powerful curiosity about what had happened behind those walls. It had closed down just a few years before, and the town was debating what to do with the buildings and property. A group of activists for the homeless were advocating for using the buildings for affordable housing and additional shelter space, and some had recently been arrested for occupying a building. There were numerous articles in the paper about the State Hospital, and public forums were planned for the near future. The curriculum was forming in my head: we'd focus on the history and current debates around the State

Hospital, pulling in the themes the class had identified, and work up to attending the public forums, where hopefully some of the class would voice their concerns or opinions. I felt lucky that we had come across such an ideal opportunity to integrate the classroom and the community.

That's when it got complicated. I had set out to find topics that the students really cared about, the things that affected their real lives, and I had found them. But instead of seeing the interest and motivation build, I felt the energy drain away. As we started to explore the history of the Hospital, I realized the topics were extremely personal; all of the students had some kind of history with mental illness or addiction. The question of who defines "sanity" and "insanity" wasn't "intriguing" to a group that had been locked up, institutionalized, medicated: it was painful. They knew the power that lies with those who create the definitions, because they had been labeled as outsiders in so many ways. The students in my class *could* think critically about these issues, but they didn't care to do it for weeks on end.

So, we backed off. Rather than focus on the State Hospital, that physical representation of so much pain and suffering, we took each of the themes individually. Moving through each of the four themes, we read and wrote and discussed ideas, invited in guest speakers, interviewed our city councilor, created a poem-book about what it would mean to live in a healthy environment, charted the ways in which we felt we had power or lacked it, created an 8-foot timeline to chart the developments of the Civil Rights Movement, and discussed the demographics of who votes and why it is that people don't vote, among many other things. We continuously linked our conversations back to our own lived experiences, and I continued to be impressed with the insight of the group.

Despite the rich and productive discussions, I wondered constantly whether I was doing "participatory education" the "right" way. Half way through the project, we didn't seem any closer to the goal of taking action than when we started. I wrote in my class journal, "I don't know whether I am doing this whole VERA thing right. We are working on great questions that have to do with civic participation, history, how to get involved and take action, understanding some of the societal forces that affect our lives. But what is the project? What is the action? How do we define action?" I felt like I should be moving the group towards some concrete action. And yet, the group didn't seem ready to get out into the community. We needed to develop our *capacity* for taking action. At the very least, we needed to be able to listen to each other and disagree about important topics without getting angry. We needed to be able to function as a group without spontaneously self-destructing.

We also needed to have the faith that change is possible. Our conversations about the problems in society would often conclude with someone saying, "Yeah, but that will never change." I realized how deep was their sense of disempowerment when the most optimistic member of the class tried to convince the others that change really could happen in our small town — but only if President Clinton came and saw what needed to be done. I was astounded to realize how centralized their view of power was. "Apparently, the only person who could effect change in Northampton is the single most powerful person in the world," I wrote in my journal. "So what does that say about the rest of us? That we *really* have no power. If I have a personal goal for this class, it's to get people to start believing that they can change things, or at least that people like them have changed things."

I set about introducing stories of "regular" people who got together to make positive social change. One of the readings that seemed to have the most impact was a story of a high school football team that was upset because their fans would shout racial slurs at the Hispanic players, particularly if those players missed a play. The teens got together, despite a lack of support from some school officials, and addressed their fans during half-time at the next game, telling them that they wouldn't play if the racial slurs continued. The teens were successful, and the hurtful comments ceased. It's a powerful story, and the class was really moved. (See Appendix H for story).

Despite my worries about not taking "action," I think we accomplished a great deal in this class. In a group statement the students wrote for other

VERA students, they described what they had learned and how they had changed. One student wrote, "I've become something that I'm not used to by being in this classroom. We have to become humble here and listen to what everyone has to say. …Now I can hear other people's ideas, which is not me at all. I'm more open-minded now." I learned a lot as well, especially to let go of my preconceived ideas of what is "real" or legitimate social action. In our classroom, the "action" took place inside all of us.

Margaret Anderson is a teacher and volunteer coordinator at the Northampton, MA site of The Literacy Project. She participated in the VERA teacher inquiry project in 1998.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Paper Quilt Connections

Paper quilts offer people colorful, tactile, and patterned ways of expressing themselves. Here is an activity that also helps people find connections to one another.

Distribute four sheets of colored paper to each person, one sheet of each color. Have markers available. Write on newsprint: self, family, heritage, and community. Assign each one a color.

Ask participants to write on the assigned colors:

5 words to describe yourself
5 words to describe your family
5 words to describe your heritage
5 words to describe your community

Share your lists in small groups and talk about the similarities and differences. Create a pattern with all your squares that illustrates the connections or themes that you found. Explain to the group how you created your pattern.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Ways in to Thinking about Our Connections to Community

A Menu of Options

Discussion Catalysts

- What does community mean to you?
- What communities are you part of?
- What does it mean to be an active community member?
- How are you active? How do you know what is going on in your community?
- What do you need to know about where you live?
- What community issues are of concern to you?
- What is a healthy community?
- What is a good citizen?
- What does it mean to "exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship"?

Writing Catalysts

- Write about your community – its strengths and weaknesses.
  When I think about my community, I think . . .
  What I would like to change about my community is . . .
- Write about a person you know who made a difference for the benefit of his or her community.
- Think about a time when you took action to deal with a problem. Do you think it was successful? Why or why not? What did you learn from it?

Reading Catalysts

Read about the activism of people students can relate to and then discuss:

- What was the problem?
- What made people decide to take action?
- What made it hard to take action?
- Why did they act anyway?
- How was the problem resolved?
- What factors contributed to the success of the activism?

PREP AND PRACTICE

Building Community Visions

Most people have experienced the educational process as one where we learn about reality as it is, not as it could or should be. As a result, learning how to imagine and create change is difficult. There are so few models of how to build people's dreams and values into the learning process. Yet, without people's visions and imaginations, our proposals for change are undermined. The purpose of this activity is to feed the imagination. These activities are meant to promote creative thinking — thinking that goes beyond the boundaries of what exists. Then hopefully when groups plan for the future they will be able to draw upon their collective dreams and values.

Personal Visions

This activity gives individuals a chance to dream about their own hopes for the future. Each student gets a large sheet of construction paper. Ask students to divide their paper into thirds with lines. Ask them to draw or write a poem that represents their past on one third of the page, their present on another third, and their hopes for their future on the last third. Share their pictures. If students prefer, they can sing or act out their past, present, and future.

Community Wish List

This can be done in small groups or as a whole group, depending upon group size and how well people know each other.

Create a community wish list. It should include all the things that you wish your community had to offer. Nothing is off limits here and people should be encouraged to suggest the most impossible and unusual wishes. The wishes can be expressed in words or images.

This activity can foster both negative and positive assessments about a community. These can be listed side by side on newsprint or a blackboard so that the whole group gets a sense of both.

Do-Something Scenario

In creating this scenario each small group is asked to write a description of their community in 20 years if something is done about a situation they want resolved. Each group will first have to decide what action is taken in that community. Then they will write a scenario about what happens. Again the scenario should be as rich as possible, full of examples of what community life will be like. Nothing is too fantastic to forecast and nothing is too small to report.

Adapted with permission from *Claiming What is Ours: An Economic Experience Workbook*, by Wendy Luttrell, Highlander Center, 1988. 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820

PREP AND PRACTICE

Talking about Power

Activity 1: Concentric Circles
The purpose of this activity is to reflect on personal experiences of anger and power, and to practice communication skills.

Ask the group to count off by twos. Ask the "ones" to make a circle and stand facing outward. The "twos" should make a circle around them, facing inward. Everyone should be standing across from a partner.

Explain that you will give them a topic, and that the "ones" should talk about the topic for about one minute. You will call time after the minute, and then the "twos" will have their turn to talk for about a minute. When their time is up, the outer circle moves around one person to the right, to stand in front of a new partner, and the activity begins again with a new topic.

Discussion topics:
- A time I felt powerless.
- A time I discovered that I had more power than I realized.
- A time I used power destructively.
- A time I used power constructively.
- A time I shared power and achieved something that would have been hard to achieve alone.

Adapted with permission from *Help Increase the Peace. Program Manual*, American Friends Service Committee, Middle Atlantic Region, 1999. (410) 323-7200

PREP AND PRACTICE

Talking about Power

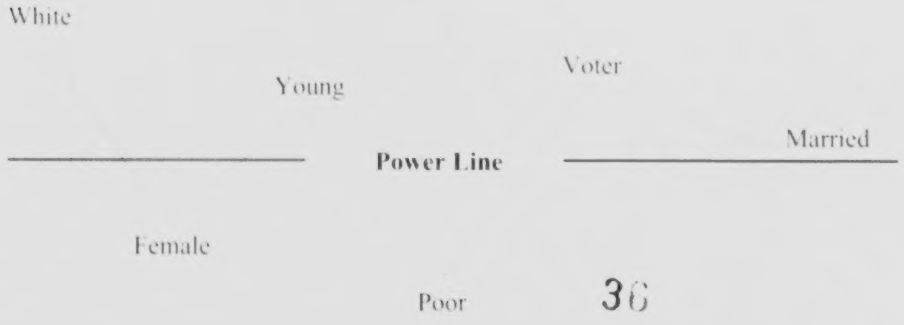
Activity 2: The Power Line

What constitutes power and the lack of it? How do we feel when we have it and when we don't? How do we perceive our power compared to how others perceive it? What do we learn by comparing our perceptions? These are questions that can be examined in the power line activity.

On large paper, draw a long horizontal line labeled "Power in the Community." Ask the group to name things or groups that have power and list these above the line. Then for everything that has power, name the counterpart that doesn't have power. Note that there may not be consensus on the status of each group. For example, some participants might place "old" above the power line; others would place it below.

Employer	Voters	White
Rich	Urban	Heterosexual
Right side of the tracks	Male	Etc.
	Power Line	
Employee	Non-voters	People of color
Poor	Rural	Homosexual, Bisexual
Wrong side of the tracks	Female	Etc.

Each person graphs where they stand along the power line. The graph can capture the present moment or can chronicle part of a person's lifetime, charting how our relation to power can change over time.



PREP AND PRACTICE

In the next part of the activity, there's discussion of how we perceive each other's power. The way this part is structured should depend on how much trust there is among the group. In a new group, or one with an uncertain level of trust, it might be enough to have people present their graphs, with the group responding with observations about things that surprised them. In a more trusting group, participants can pair up and do power lines of each other, and then compare their two sets of perceptions. In either version, the point is to increase our understanding of each other and our relationships to power. How does it feel to have power? How does it feel to be perceived as having power when you don't feel that you have it? How can we all have power together?

Adapted with permission from *Claiming What is Ours: An Economic Experience Workbook* by Wendy Luttrell, Highlander Center, 1988. 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820.

Section 2

Holding Decision-Makers Accountable

Section Introduction

Vermont Students Win Resources and Action

Pushed Too Far: Poor Women Defend Their Food Stamps

Immigrant Students Advocate for Adult Education

Walking Students Through a Legislative Process

"Campaigning Should Always Be Like This"

The "Clinic": A Community Organizes in Philadelphia

Dialogue Day: Teens Have Their Say

Section 2: Introduction

The examples in this section draw primarily upon the following skills and activities.

EFF Common Activities

✓ Gather, Analyze, and Use Information
___ Manage Resources
✓ Work Within the Big Picture
___ Work Together
___ Provide Leadership
___ Guide and Support Others
___ Seek Guidance and Support from Others
___ Develop and Express Sense of Self
___ Respect Others and Value Diversity
✓ Exercise Rights and Responsibilities
___ Create and Pursue Vision and Goals
___ Use Technology & Other Tools to Accomplish Goals
✓ Keep Pace with Change

EFF Skills

Communication Skills

✓ Read with Understanding
✓ Convey Ideas in Writing
✓ Speak So Others Can Understand
✓ Listen Actively
✓ Observe Critically

Decision Making Skills

___ Use Math to Solve Problems & Communicate
___ Solve Problems and Make Decisions
___ Plan

Interpersonal Skills

✓ Cooperate with Others
✓ Advocate and Influence
✓ Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
___ Guide Others

Lifelong Learning Skills

___ Take Responsibility for Learning
✓ Reflect and Evaluate
✓ Learn through Research
___ Use Information & Communication Technology

The focus of this section is on holding decision-makers accountable for their policies and promises about issues that matter to us. This approach to civic participation generally accepts the authority of decision-makers, but aims to influence their decisions. It requires the use of research skills to learn about the history and context of a situation, to find out where leaders stand on the issue, and to understand the ways we can access systems of power and decision-making. It also requires advocacy skills – observing how a problem impacts the people around you, and then finding the clarity and confidence to speak up about it.

The stories in this section describe several examples of people speaking up to legislators, welfare and school officials, and the police.

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you review this section:

1. What is accountability?
2. Who's accountable to whom?
3. What cultural and political assumptions underlie this form of civic participation?
4. What are some strengths and limitations of holding decision-makers accountable as a way to improve community?

Vermont Students Win Resources and Action

by Carolyn Bronz and Lou Dorwaldt

Our Goalseekers class is a group of single mothers who are facing time limits on their welfare benefits and are trying to build their academic and work skills quickly. The class has invited legislators in to visit and discuss issues for the last three years. This year students were prepared to discuss and ask questions about an issue that was very important to them – welfare reform.

The students have been concerned that Vermont's welfare reform initiative does not emphasize the importance of getting an adequate education in preparation for a tough job market. They also feel it doesn't effectively address the issue of transportation. Almost every member of the class has problems with transportation which make it difficult if not impossible to hold down jobs and keep appointments. Not being able to buy, maintain, register, and insure vehicles means that students must depend on others or drive illegally in order to meet the obligations under welfare reform. Other issues of concern are child care, housing, lack of jobs that pay a living wage, and loss of medical insurance when moving from welfare to work. The legislators were so impressed with what they heard that day that they invited the whole class to go to Montpelier and testify before the state's Joint Committee on Health and Welfare.

It took us months of preparation to get ready. We studied the policies of welfare and welfare reform. We discussed and debated issues of public assistance, jobs, and education. We researched the many different forms of welfare, and discovered that many rich individuals and corporations receive massive assistance which is not called "welfare" and does not carry a stigma. We discussed the successes and the inequities of the system that we live with. We all came to Montpelier armed with this knowledge, and with our own experience. We came in the spirit of presenting good information and feedback to our lawmakers so that they could use our testimony to make changes and fine-tune the process of reform.

Four students spoke, telling about the problems they face everyday as mothers who are expected to get jobs. Because each story was intensely personal and heartfelt the legislators were transfixed, and kept us there long beyond our scheduled hour. They asked us to stay through several rounds of votes on the floor. They asked each speaker many questions and were clearly surprised and touched by what they heard. Some of the women got immediate assistance with tough problems they were dealing with, and extra funds were allocated for two public transportation initiatives – a twice daily bus into the city, and more money for the "Good New Garage," a place that fixes up cars and gives them to low-income people. The experience made a huge impression on the students. As one said, "The committee really seemed interested in what we had to say about our situation. I thought we were going to go down there and just be blown off. But I was wrong." Every one of the students came out of there feeling empowered.

Another outcome of the testimony was that legislators contacted Reach Up, the office that administers welfare-to-work, to encourage a meeting between staff and the women who are affected by their decisions. We thought that if the Reach Up people could learn more about some of the problems we were having, maybe the program would become more beneficial to people who are trying to get off welfare and find jobs. We did more research, drew up an extensive list of questions, and practiced by holding mock interviews. And again, we had a very successful meeting that resulted in action in several areas.

The women we work with continue to be active in advocating for their needs. Our current class has written and won a $4,000 grant to fund emergency child care and transportation. They are learning how to write proposals, raise funds, administer a grant, and manage a budget. It is exciting to be along for the ride!

Carolyn Bronz and Lou Dorwaldt teach in St. Albans for the Vermont Adult Learning Program.

HANDOUT

Researching History and Current Issues

When you're going to do research, it's helpful to think about some things first. Individually or in groups, use the following questions to help you prepare for your research.

Issue or topic:

1. What do you already know about this?

2. How did you learn about it? Where did you get the information?

3. What is the history of the issue in this community?

4. Do you think it is important to know this history? Why or why not?

5. What else do you want to know?

6. How can you find out?

   People:
   Organizations:
   Library resources:
   Other:

PREP AND PRACTICE

Talking to Legislators

by David J. Rosen

In many states, adult education classes visit their state lawmakers. Students have many different purposes in mind. Some want to learn how lawmaking works by seeing the democratic process in action. Civic literacy is important in itself. It is also needed by students who are preparing for the GED test or for American citizenship. Some students may want to talk with legislators about issues of concern. Or they may want to thank them for the specific votes or other actions they have taken on certain issues. Some students come from countries where democracy is not practiced; indeed, a reason for coming to this country may have been political freedom. Visiting legislators is one way for them to see how this works.

There are three parts to making such a visit: preparation, the visit itself, and processing what happened afterwards.

1. Preparation

In the weeks before the visit, students and teachers need to ask and answer some questions and make some decisions together:

- *When should the visit be made?*

  Should it be organized to coincide with an issues-oriented event, or for a time of year when legislators have more time to visit with constituents, or during a hearing on an issue students are concerned about?

- *Should it be made during class time or not?*

  There are many factors to think about here: the students' available time, the teacher's available time, whether this can be considered an educational activity or whether it is an advocacy activity (or both.) If it is organized around a hearing, often there is no choice.

- *What issues will students present?*

  If students are meeting with legislators to raise issues of concern, they need to decide which issues are most important, and to narrow these to one or two, and then to prepare carefully what they want to say and give legislators to read.

Here are some questions to spark a discussion to identify these issues:

- What problem in the community would you like to bring to your state legislator's attention?
- What would you like your government to do for you?
- Are there some changes you would like your representative to support?
- Is there a position your representative has taken that you agree with? Or that you would like her/him to change?

Of course, if the teacher and students have been working together for some time, some issues may have already come up in class, and the teacher or students should bring them out as possibilities.

Students writing to their legislators

Once the issues are clear, students should compose a letter to each legislator they wish to visit. They could visit those state senators or representatives who represent the area where their learning program is located, or where students live, if this is different.

Pre-writing

Using a language experience approach or other process for generating ideas, students could generate and organize their thoughts as a group. Save the notes from this discussion, possibly on newsprint. Then, revisit them in the days before the visit.

Writing

One or two students, working with the teacher, could take these thoughts and compose and edit the letter(s). Each letter should be no more than one page. It could include attachments if there are written materials which you would like the legislator to read before the meeting. Request a meeting in the letter, and say that you will follow-up with a phone call to arrange a convenient day and time.

Replies and follow-up

Elected representatives (or their aides on their behalf) usually reply to such a letter quickly. After you receive the reply, someone — ideally a student — needs to call to arrange an appointment. The class could help the student prepare by role-playing the call, with possible questions which a legislative aide might ask such as: Tell me about your class. Is this a school? What grade levels are the students? What will you want to meet about? How much time do you need? How many people will be coming? Do these students live in the district the legislator represents?

In the days before the visit, the class will need to:

- *Prepare questions to ask or points to express to the legislator*

  Most of these will have been raised in the discussions which led to writing the letter. The class could revisit these. It's a good idea to write down the questions, possibly on note cards.

- *Choose spokespeople*

  Choose more than one person, perhaps two or three representing both genders, different ethnicities and first languages. Also, have one or two people prepared as back-ups.

PREP AND PRACTICE

- *Prepare or gather written materials to give the legislator*

  If students have a particular issue they want to raise, they must inform themselves on the issue, and in the process they may find written materials they wish to share with the legislator. For example, if students are interested in the "reform of welfare reform" they will need to show evidence of what isn't working in the current welfare reform legislation and how it should be changed.

- *Rehearse speaking, how to deal with nervousness*

  The speakers may need to role play what they are going to say, practice asking questions or making points using notes to talk rather than reading word-for-word. Provide students with first-time public speaking tips such as: Usually people are very nervous the first time. If you are, it's fine to say so – this may relieve the nervousness. Don't be surprised if this is more of a conversation than a speech. In their offices, legislators try to be informal, try to make people – especially those who are visiting for the first time – as comfortable as possible.

- *Choose photographers and/or note-takers*

  Recording what was said at the visit is important, especially if the class plans to publish the visit later. It is also useful, in preparing for the follow-up discussion, to have good notes because some participants may not have understood all of the discussion.

2. The Visit

Each visit is unique. Even the best preparation may go awry. So students need to expect the unexpected, enjoy and learn from the experience whatever it is. For example, one time when students in Massachusetts visited the State House, they had collected thousands of signatures on a petition to support adult literacy. The plan was to roll the petition down the State House steps, down the long sidewalk, across the street and on as far as it would go. When they got there they found it was raining. But that didn't stop them. They rolled that petition down the steps and into the street – it wasn't long, though, before it was a soggy mess. No one wanted to save it for the archives, but we do have some great pictures of it.

3. After the Visit: Processing What Happened

Often a first visit to the legislature is a heady experience for students. They may be surprised to have met their legislators or their aides in person, in their offices. They may be surprised that their legislators took them seriously, listened, asked good questions, asked for more information. Or maybe not.

In one case in Massachusetts, a student returning from the State House told a teacher that in his country, if he had visited a legislator and raised the same kinds of issues he had just spoken about, he would have been shot. A sobering thought for those of us who take democracy for granted.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Students will probably want to talk about their experience. Some may wish to write about it. And they may wish to publish their writings about their visits. Some may want to make WorldWide Web pages about their visit. For an example of this, see the Virtual Visit to the State House at [http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/ltc/alri/vv.html].

It's sometimes a good idea to review what happened in the visit, what the students said, how the legislators understood them, how the legislators replied, what may (or may not) have been understood or accomplished. The notes of the visit will be important for this discussion.

David Rosen is the director of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute in Boston, MA.

Letter to State Representative Alice Wolf

Dear Representative Wolf,

We are residents of Cambridge and students of the Community Learning Center. We thank you for welcoming us to the State House and wish to share with you our concerns regarding the following issues:

1. re: Status of Haitian immigrants - We feel that Haitians who were paroled into or applied for asylum in the U.S. prior to the end of 1995 should have been granted "green cards." They should have been granted refugee status, given that they left Haiti because of a valid fear of persecution.

2. re: Welfare Reform - We feel that food stamps and funding for legal immigrants should be restored to their previous levels of accessibility.

3. re: Bilingual Education - We feel that bilingual education should continue to be accessible in communities where there is a specific concentrated population of linguistic minorities that requests such a system. In other areas, more bilingual staff should be hired to provide after-school tutorials for students in need of additional help.

4. re: Department of Social Services (DSS) - Some of our students feel that the DSS is too quick to take children from their homes in cases of alleged neglect or abuse. For the sake of the children and families involved, these cases must be investigated more carefully.

Thank you, Representative Wolf, for any support you can lend in relaying our concerns to your colleagues. Thank you also for your long-standing support of our programs and of efforts to increase the public funding for Adult Basic Education and English-as-a-Second-Language classes.

Most Sincerely,

ESL 5 morning class/Community Learning Center

Pushed Too Far:

Poor Women Defend Their Food Stamps

by Beth Bingman, based on the writings of Sharon Kimberlin

Ann is a student in a community-based adult education program in St. Charles, Virginia. She is also the mother of three children, two in school and one still at home. Going back to school has not always been easy, but she wanted to make a change in her life. She took the opportunity to attend an Even Start program that had a pre-school program as well as adult education.

St. Charles is a small coal-mining community with many of the problems typical of Appalachian communities – high unemployment, poor housing, isolation from the decision-makers in the county seat. But St. Charles is an active community, and people have come together to establish a community clinic, a community center, and to rebuild the town. Ann was aware of some of these efforts, but with three small children, she had not really been involved. She did try to help her neighbors, especially the older couple next door. At Christmas she took her children to the party at the community center and volunteered to help out.

When she started back to school Ann's goals were to pass the GED test, and to get out of the house. She also hoped the daycare program might help her youngest get ready for school. Ann thought of herself as shy, and going back to school was a big step. But she soon found herself taking bigger steps than she ever imagined. In October, Ann came to class and found the other women talking about a notice several of them had received in the mail telling them to come to the county seat to pick up their food stamps in person. Stamps would no longer be mailed.

The teacher asked the class what they might do about this situation. They made a list of what they wanted to know. They decided to invite an attorney from legal services to the class, but they also began to find answers themselves. Several class members called the Department of Social Services. One class member called her Board of Supervisors member. Ann did not call anyone except to ask when to come pick up her stamps. She was afraid she might lose her stamps altogether if she made trouble. But she did decide she could help get information. She visited everyone who lived on her road and asked if they had a way to get their stamps. She wrote down what people told her and took this information back to class.

The next week when she had an appointment to pick up her stamps, Ann got a ride to the DSS office. When she arrived, there were dozens of people in line. And there was one of her classmates interviewing people. Ann was amazed. She would never have the courage to do something like that! But she admired her friend and was anxious to talk to her to find out what she had learned.

When the class met the next day they put together the information they had gathered. They learned that the local DSS office had decided to stop mailing stamps to two communities because too many people in those areas had reported their stamps stolen. More than seven hundred people were affected, and many people had a difficult time picking up their stamps, due to no transportation, poor health, and lack of information about what they needed to do. The class members wrote essays telling about their situations and what they had learned.

Ann wrote her story, telling about her bad back and the pain she had standing in line. She did not mention the embarrassment, but she felt that, too. The next month she went back to pick up stamps on a cold, wet November day. As she took her place in line, she realized that just ahead of her was an older woman leaning on a cane and wheeling a portable oxygen tank. All the embarrassment Ann felt was replaced by anger. How could they treat anyone that way?! The woman made it through the line, and so did Ann. When she went to class the next day, Ann told what she had seen. She got the telephone number of the Board of Supervisors and called. She called the local welfare board. And she called the DSS office. Later, she registered to vote.

A few weeks later, two days before Christmas, the local paper carried an article saying that the Department of Social Services had reversed their decision because it "had created a hardship on many families." The stamps would be mailed again. The St. Charles class did not receive any official notification of the change, but they knew that they had made a difference. They had written, called, collected information, and taken action. They now knew the welfare board members who had supported the decision to require people to pick up their stamps. And they knew who had appointed them and when the next election would be. Ann has registered to vote.

Reprinted with permission from the Center for Literacy Studies, Equipped for the Future Project Report to the National Institute for Literacy, July 1996

HANDOUT

Finding Resources: Who Can Help You?

It is good to get support from other people in your neighborhood. Maybe there is a tenants association where you live or another type of neighborhood group. Talk to your neighbors. How do they feel about the problem? Do they want to change it?

Who else has worked on the same problem? You can ask people at your church, community center or local school. Your public library has people who can help you find answers to your questions. Go to the "reference desk."

As you talk to different people, try using questions like these. Write down what you find out right there.

1. What has been tried in the past to solve this problem?

2. What are some ideas about what should be done now?

3. Who else can I contact?

The more information you have, the more power you have!

Reprinted with permission from *How to be Heard and Make a Difference*, a workbook funded by a Library Services and Construction Act grant from the California State Library to the Santa Clara County Library Reading Program. Under the Key to Community Project, the New Reader Council of the Bay Area created these materials for fellow learners in partnership with the Center for Civic Literacy. © 1995 Santa Clara County Public Library

HANDOUT

Finding Resources: Where to Get Help in Your Town

You may need to adapt this to your local government structure.

My city or town ______________________________

My county ______________________________

Who is elected to represent me	**City and County Departments**

Mayor ____________________

☎ ____________________

✏ ____________________

City Council ____________________

☎ ____________________

✏ ____________________

City Supervisors ____________________

☎ ____________________

✏ ____________________

State Representative ____________________

☎ ____________________

✏ ____________________

City Manager ____________________

☎ ____________________

✏ ____________________

Departments: Where to call if you have a question about:

Child Care - call your school district or Parks and Recreation Dept. ____________

Crime - call Police ____________

Drugs - call Police ____________

Fire Department ____________

Graffiti - ask information ____________

Housing Authority ____________

Library ____________

Pot Holes - call Public Works ____________

Trash - call Public Works ____________

Other ____________

Other people I can call: ______________________________

____

____

Reprinted with permission from *How to be Heard and Make a Difference*. © 1995 Santa Clara County Public Library

HANDOUT

Finding Resources: Public Services

Sometimes it is hard to know where to go for help with a problem. For some problems, you can go to government agencies. For other problems, there are community organizations that can help you.

You can use the telephone book to look for help. To find government agencies, you look in the blue pages of the telephone book. The blue pages are divided into United States, state, and local government agencies. Use the blue pages to look for the agency that might help you with each of the following problems:

1. You find a dead raccoon near your house.

   ____

2. You believe you were fired from your job because of discrimination.

   ____

3. You want to find out how to register to vote.

   ____

4. You need to know where you can get free health care for your child.

   ____

5. You would like to get some job training so you can get a better job.

   ____

6. Your landlord does not fix problems in the building.

   ____

HANDOUT

Making a Phone Call

Phone calls can be important. This is a way for you to say, "There is a problem in my neighborhood and I need help!"

Making a phone call can be scary. We may not think we know how to talk to someone in government or someone who sounds important. We may feel like we might not say the right thing. But do not let this keep you from being heard.

Getting Ready to Call

Before you call, it helps to plan what you will say. You will be less nervous if you are prepared.

1. What are you calling about?
(one sentence about the problem and where it is)

____

____

2. Who are you?
(your name and how you are related to the problem)

____

____

3. Why are you calling? (a short statement about the problem)

____

____

4. What would you like done or what are you trying to find out?

____

____

Phone tips:

- Do not have loud noise in the room when you are calling
- Be polite
- Ask the people you talk to how to spell their names
- If they say they cannot help you, ask who can
- Keep your cool
- Do not talk fast
- Speak clearly

Reprinted with permission from *How to be Heard and Make a Difference* © 1995 Santa Clara County Public Library

Immigrant Students Advocate for Adult Education

by Jonathan Leaning

The timing was right. In the fall of 1995, the elections were quickly approaching, and the upcoming local race provided a good opportunity for Bob Jeltsch's citizenship class to look at elections, voting, and voter registration. Since knowledge of these issues was also core to the naturalization test that students were preparing for, it was easy to insert a voting activity into the curriculum. It was also a good chance to take a meaningful look into voting while encouraging students to register.

After having the class read over voter registration forms and related class materials, Bob started off a discussion with questions such as, "Who votes, who doesn't vote, and why?" The subject inspired reflections on the meaning of elections and democracy, particularly since the students inevitably made comparisons to the political systems in their own countries. One Nigerian student talked of his experience with military rule, and how the lack of freedom of speech had shaped his perceptions of the risks of discussing politics in public. Talking about the different forms of democracy and government operating in each country brought the subject alive for the class. By contrasting the various systems, Bob was able to illustrate what voting could mean in the United States. This provided an effective lead-in to the upcoming local elections and related issues.

Following the discussion, Bob suggested that students go out to talk to other classes about voting and how to register. This would provide them with an opportunity to practice their speaking skills while further exploring the issue. Initially, they were hesitant about doing this, but as they started into the project, their nervousness seemed to diminish. Once they began doing their presentations in the other classes, they found that there was a wide range of perspectives. The common questions such as, "Why vote if there's no one good to vote for?" and "What is the point?" were raised in the discussions, challenging both their speaking abilities and their grasp of the issue. They were surprised to discover the number of students who as yet hadn't registered to vote. When they reached the end of their presentations, they handed out registration forms to everyone in the class. Once finished with the project, many of the students expressed satisfaction to Bob at having "done something."

Meanwhile, Bob heard that major changes in the distribution of adult education funding were being considered at the state level. The changes proposed would dramatically affect the students' access to adult education classes at the center and elsewhere.

Bob suggested that as part of their writing activities, they write a letter to the appropriate public officials to let them know their thoughts on the matter. As they talked about how to write the letter, Bob used the opportunity to explore the concept of the three branches of government, elaborating on the role of the branch to which the letter was being directed. This helped the students to identify what they wanted to say and to focus their ideas. Without correcting any of the text, Bob typed up the class' letter and brought it back for the next session. The class studied the letter, made the necessary corrections, then mailed it off. They did not receive any reply from the public official, but when students composed and sent off their own letters to their respective state representatives, they did receive reply letters.

The students were surprised when a state representative agreed to come and meet with them at the school. The legislator's visit proved to be more than he had bargained for. Once the discussion opened up, questions came one after the other. Towards the end of the event, one student, a Cambodian woman, stood up and delivered a fiery speech on why funding shouldn't be cut. She concluded the speech with an impassioned "Please don't cut our school!" at which point all the students spontaneously stood up and applauded.

After a few weeks, news arrived that not only had the cuts been warded off, but the legislature decided to increase state funding by $4 million. "When I announced the news in class, a cheer broke out!" says Bob. Though the students knew that their class was but one piece of the statewide movement, "they felt they had accomplished something important." The additional funding meant that the very classes they were taking could continue to be available to people like themselves. It was a concrete achievement in which they had played an important part.

Bob Jeltsch was at the time an ESOL teacher at Harborside Community Center in Boston, MA

Excerpted with permission from the draft copy of *Incorporating Citizen Participation Into Adult Education Curricula* by Jonathan Leaning, published by the Massachusetts Department of Education

Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2"> Executive Branch</th><th colspan="2"> Legislative Branch</th><th colspan="2"> Judicial Branch</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">President</td><td colspan="2">Congress</td><td colspan="2">Courts</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Powers</td><td colspan="2">Powers</td><td colspan="2">Powers</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Enforce, propose and veto laws</td><td colspan="2">• Make laws
• Can override a veto</td><td colspan="2">• Judicial review of laws and executive actions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Prepare U.S. budget</td><td colspan="2">• Control appropriations</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Conduct foreign policy and make treaties</td><td colspan="2">• Approve treaties
• Declare war</td><td colspan="2">• Interpret treaties</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Command armed forces</td><td colspan="2">• Raise and support armed forces</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• Appoint federal judges, Cabinet members, ambassadors and other federal officials</td><td colspan="2">• Approve appointments</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">• May grant pardons and reprieves</td><td colspan="2">• Impeach and judge federal officials</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Checks</td><td colspan="2">Checks</td><td colspan="2">Checks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Legislative</td><td>Judicial</td><td>Executive</td><td>Judicial</td><td>Executive</td><td>Legislative</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Veto laws
• Call special sessions</td><td>• Appoint judges
• Grant pardons and reprieves</td><td>• Override veto
• Impeach federal officials
• Control money
• Confirm treaties and appointments</td><td>• Impeach judges
• Approve appointments
• Propose amendments
• Establish lower courts
• Change size of court</td><td>• Interpret laws</td><td>• Decide constitutionality of laws</td></tr>
</table>

Reprinted with permission from *The People and the Power Game*. © Hedrick Smith Productions and South Carolina Educational Television

HANDOUT

Comparing Political Cultures

Your Home Culture

- Draw a picture of a "citizen" in your country and share it with the group.
- Tell the group something about the historical events you have lived through in your country. How did these events affect people's political beliefs and actions?

Comparing Political Cultures

	United States	Home Country
What do citizens do?		
How do people participate in politics?		
How do people participate in their communities?		

In the United States

Do you think it is important to participate in the community? In politics? Why or why not?

Adapted with permission from an activity developed by Mary T. Comeau-Kronenwetter, Ed.D.

58

PREP AND PRACTICE

Civic Rights and Responsibilities

Teacher Preparation

This country has always been proud of its unique style of democracy. The quality of our democracy is based on the quality of participation by all citizens. Some people suggest a correlation between literacy levels and participation in the community. In preparing for this lesson, you may want to incorporate the issues that are of concern to this group. Some questions to consider for this lesson are:

- Do you think low literacy skills interfere with citizens' ability to understand and participate in a democracy?
- How do citizens with low literacy skills get information about issues concerning their lives?
- How can citizens, through the electoral process, influence the quality of life in their communities?
- What do people in your class think about voting?

Goal

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify specific activities related to exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens and the skills necessary to participate in such activities.

Materials Needed

Reading about citizenship. (See page 51.)

Pre-Reading Discussion

The pre-reading questions should get students thinking and talking about what they already know about citizenship and voting from their own experience and knowledge. You may also want to include questions that reflect specific issues of concern to your community. Pre-reading questions can include but are not limited to questions such as:

- What does it mean to be a citizen?
- What does voting have to do with citizenship?
- How does a citizen participate in each branch of government?

PREP AND PRACTICE

Post-Reading Discussion

Post-reading questions should help students get in touch with their thoughts and feelings about the reading. Some possible questions are:

- What did you think of this reading?
- What parts of the reading can you relate to? Why?
- Do you agree with the writer's views about voting?
- Is the U.S. "a free country with a free people" in your opinion? Explain your opinion.
- Do you think voting will make a difference for you? How?
- Explain what you know about the jury system.

Writing and Sharing

Develop your own stem sentence or use the following stem sentence to get students to begin writing. Ask students to read their pieces aloud and to give and get feedback:

Exercising rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the United States means . . .

Evaluation

It is important that students have an opportunity to express how they felt about the lesson and what was learned. Questions can include:

- How did you feel about this lesson?
- What more do you want to know about this topic?
- What will you do differently as a result of participating in this lesson?

Adapted with permission from materials developed by Literacy South, 331 West Main Street, Durham, NC 27701.

Handout: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

60

HANDOUT

The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

It is often said that America is a nation of immigrants. With the exception of the native Americans, we are all immigrants or the children or grandchildren or great-grandchildren of immigrants.

Many of our ancestors stood full of hope and fear at what the new world might hold. Some came to escape political or religious terrors. Some came because their countries no longer offered food or work. Some – like my ancestors – came against their will, carried far from their homelands by slavetraders trafficking human beings. Some came because a friend or relative had paved the way for them, and had sent news of a better life in America.

What does it mean to be an American? It means that you are afforded the opportunity to share in and benefit from America's wealth and power. But being an American also means that you must support and defend the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution is the blueprint for our system of democracy. It sets out the structure for our government and provides certain rights to all citizens. The dedication of you and your fellow Americans to honor it is our only guarantee that we will remain a free nation. In the United States Constitution, there are three branches of our government: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. This system is designed to ensure that no particular individual or group of individuals can take control of this country away from us, the people.

As a citizen, you have the right to play a role in each of these branches of government. As for the executive branch, for example, you decide who will be President of the United States. As for the judicial branch, you decide how disputes between your fellow citizens or between the government and your fellow citizens should be resolved.

In exchange for this great opportunity you assume certain responsibilities. The Constitution can only work if each citizen shoulders his or her share of the burden. It is designed to ensure that the voices of the few and the powerful can never drown out the voices that speak of the men and women like you and me.

Your part of this covenant is first that you must raise your voice, and make your desires known in the voting booth. Your vote is what gives life to our democracy and makes our system work. You must also be willing to serve on juries. The jury system is our best hope of assuring that in civil and criminal trials the outcome is not determined by a few powerful individuals but by people like you who represent the collective conscience of the community.

This is the covenant with America: to participate in the decisions made in all its branches of government. In return, America will give you its most cherished blessing, a free country with a free people. America is not a perfect country. Its people are not a perfect people. What you can take comfort and pride in, however, is that she continues to strive for perfection. This country is a work in progress.

Excerpted from a speech to new citizens by Judge Reginald Lindsay of the U.S. District Court, published in a newsletter of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Boston, MA.

PREP AND PRACTICE

History of Voting

Many of us take our right to vote for granted. Our state and federal governments, however, have been instrumental in the past in denying different groups of people – including women, African Americans, young people, people who didn't own land and who couldn't pay poll taxes, and people who couldn't read and write – the right to vote. And throughout history these groups of people have organized, struggled, and fought for their right to vote. This activity presents a brief history of voting rights in this country.

Begin with a general discussion of what a democracy is and how it is different from other types of governments. Ask learners, "What does it mean to vote?" After helping students read the handout, *What if the Government Said You Couldn't Vote?*, use these questions to discuss each section. Insert the name of each group:

- How do you think this group felt when they were not allowed to participate in the voting process?
- Who do you think denied this group the right to vote? Why would they want to do that?
- Who might have helped this group fight for the vote? Who would have fought against it?
- Do you think this group could ever have its right to vote banned again? Why or why not?

General Discussion

- How might our country be different today if only white male property owners could vote?
- Some say that taking the right to vote from criminals is a racist policy. Why do you think people believe that? Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you think it is fair that released felons cannot vote? Why or why not?
- Do you think foreign-born people who are permanent residents of the U.S. should be allowed to vote? Why or why not?

Handout: What If the Government Said You Couldn't Vote?

Adapted with permission from *Beyond Basic Skills*, Vol 2, No 3, Summer 1998 by Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin. Published by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Georgia. These activities were funded through a grant offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Office of Adult Literacy [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html]

HANDOUT

What If the Government Said You Couldn't Vote?

In modern America, almost everyone can vote who wants to. But it wasn't always that way! Here are some of the groups that have been blocked from voting over the past two hundred years.

1. Women. For many years only men were allowed to vote. Women were considered too emotional to make wise choices. It took 75 years of protesting before women won the right to vote through the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920.

2. Poor People. When this country was first founded, only white men who owned land were allowed to vote. Lawmakers believed that only property owners had enough at stake in the country to vote responsibly. By the early 1800s, the property requirement was replaced with a poll tax, which required citizens to pay a special fee in order to vote. Poll taxes were made illegal by the 24th amendment to the Constitution in 1964.

3. Young People. For many years, voting was restricted to adults 21 years and older in some states. During the Vietnam War era, many people argued that if you were old enough to fight and die for your country, you were old enough to vote. The 26th amendment, passed in 1971, granted the right to vote to everyone 18 or older.

4. People Who Could Not Read and Write. Early in America's history, some states only allowed people who could read or write to vote. State lawmakers believed that only people who could read and write could get the information they needed to make smart choices. Nowadays, there are many ways to get information that do not involve reading and writing. The 1965 Voting Rights Act banned literacy tests.

5. African Americans. The Constitution did not specifically restrict voting to White people. But it stated that only freemen or people who were not slaves could vote. This made it illegal for most African Americans to vote until after

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

the Civil War. The 15th amendment, passed in 1870, allowed black men (not women) to vote. After that, many states passed new laws to restrict black voting. Literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation were methods used to limit black voting. Southern states imposed a "grandfather" clause, which said that voters whose grandfathers had voted didn't have to take a literacy test. This benefited white men who could not read, because their grandfathers might have been able to vote. This did not help black men, however, because their grandfathers would have been slaves and would not have been able to vote anyway. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 did away with all these restrictions on who could vote. It also set up a system to make sure that the new law would be followed.

Are There Still People in the United States Who Can't Vote?

Yes. Convicted criminals in most states can't vote. States vary as to whether they restore this right when people get out of jail. In some states, a criminal is allowed to vote again once the sentence is served. Mississippi requires a pardon by the governor before a released felon can vote. Also, people who live in the U.S. but are not citizens of this country cannot vote even though they may work and pay taxes here.

Adapted with permission from *Beyond Basic Skills*, Vol 2, No 3, Summer 1998 by Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin. Published by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Georgia. These activities were funded through a grant offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Office of Adult Literacy [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html]

PREP AND PRACTICE

Who Votes?

1. Have your students study the first graph. Then have them form a human bar graph of each graph by assigning individuals or small groups (depending on class size) a variable.

2. Ask for one or more volunteers to explain how to read a graph. Help out as necessary.

3. Work with students to extract facts from the graph in the form of simple sentences. (For example, "Most people in the lowest income category don't vote" or "The highest voter turnout is among those who make $50,000 or more a year.") Have individuals share their sentences and write them on the board.

4. Go through the other two graphs in the same way. For example, a sentence gleaned from the middle chart could be: "College graduates are twice as likely to vote as those who have less than a high school education." Try to get everyone to participate in determining the facts that the graphs illustrate. When students share the sentences they created, ask them to explain why they thought those particular facts were important.

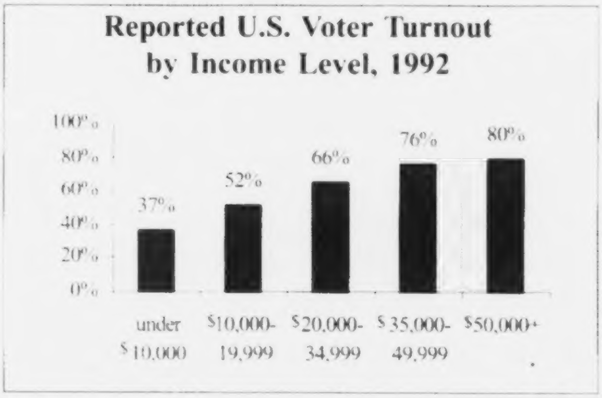
5. When learners have finished this process, engage them in a general discussion of the graphs using the discussion questions.

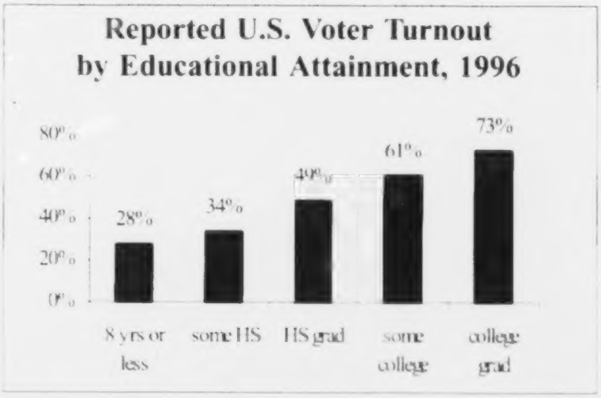
6. Have students walk around the room and share important points they learned from this activity with 3-4 other class members.

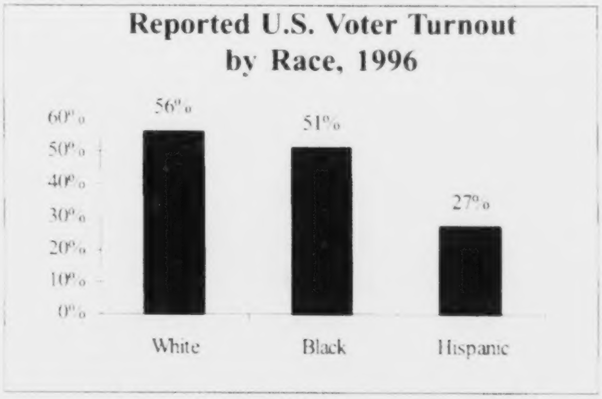
Handout: Discussion Questions

Adapted with permission from *Beyond Basic Skills*, Vol 2, No 3, Summer 1998 by Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin. Published by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Georgia. These activities were funded through a grant offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Office of Adult Literacy [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html].

HANDOUT


Reported U.S. Voter Turnout by Income Level, 1992


Reported U.S. Voter Turnout by Educational Attainment, 1996


Reported U.S. Voter Turnout by Race, 1996

source for all graphs: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Discussion Questions

1. What are these graphs about? What does this data tell you?
2. How are the graphs consistent or inconsistent?
3. Are the graphs surprising to you? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think some groups are so unlikely to vote?
5. Which of these groups have the least power in the political process?
6. What story do these graphs tell?

Adapted with permission from *Beyond Basic Skills*, Vol 2, No 3, Summer 1998 by Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin. Published by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Georgia. These activities were funded through a grant offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Office of Adult Literacy [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html]

PREP AND PRACTICE

Mathematics Using Election Results

Collect election results from local newspapers. Make sure the results show data from towns in which students either reside or those towns with which they are familiar. Call the city or town hall to find out the population of local towns.

Have students work together to come up with questions that these two sets of numbers could help them answer. They could, for example, figure out the percentage of the population that voted, or the percentage that voted for a particular candidate. They could also figure out the percentage of the vote that each candidate got or, more simply, the number of votes that the winner won by. What's important is that students articulate questions that give them a real purpose for manipulating the numbers. Have each small group present their questions to another group.

Next, discuss the meaning of what they've discovered.

- Why do they think the winner won by such a wide/slim margin?
- How large or small was the voter turnout? Why?
- What does it mean for a democracy when a small percentage of the population votes?

Walking Students Through a Legislative Process

by Paul Morse

In all of my GED classes, I try to illustrate the connection between history and current events, and encourage students to consider the complex tensions between American individualism and social justice. My aim in this particular class was to bring the legislative process alive by using it to learn about and debate real issues.

We started by reading an article on some proposed gun control legislation, which started this way:

> **Lawmakers look to limit guns: Bill addresses restraining order issue**
> *The Associated Press*
>
> New Hampshire lawmakers are trying to decide on a bill that automatically would take away guns from people who have restraining orders against them. . . . The bill would apply to temporary and permanent orders. An existing federal law already makes it illegal for people with permanent restraining orders against them to have guns.
>
> The bill passed the House earlier this year and now is being considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee. "And that's where it should stop," says Christopher Ferris, vice president of Gun Owners of New Hampshire.
>
> He says such a law should apply only to people charged with a crime. He also believes the person should get some sort of hearing before any guns can be taken away. "We believe there's enough laws on the books currently and that enforcement of current laws will protect victims of violent crime," Ferris said.
>
> But the new law could make a difference, says Linda Griebsch, public policy director for the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Of the seven domestic violence-related deaths in New Hampshire this year, six were murder-suicides and all involved guns. Griebsch said the most recent, a murder-suicide in Dover, involved a woman who had taken out a restraining order against her killer.

I then asked students to list questions that the article raised for them. These included:

- What's the difference between a bill and a law?
- What does "mandate" mean?
- How does an issue make it to the legislature?
- What's the process for getting a restraining order?
- How does a bill get from a committee to the full legislature?

These initial questions provided me with a great opportunity to discuss how a bill becomes law, the workings, divisions, and size of the New Hampshire General Court (House) and State Senate, and cover a lot of important vocabulary words like "lobbying," "judiciary," "constitutional," "coalition," and "loophole."

Next I informed the students that they would have the chance to become the Senate Judiciary Committee and would need to vote whether to send the bill out of committee to the full senate or "kill" it. I asked them to generate all the questions they felt they needed to have answered before they could vote.

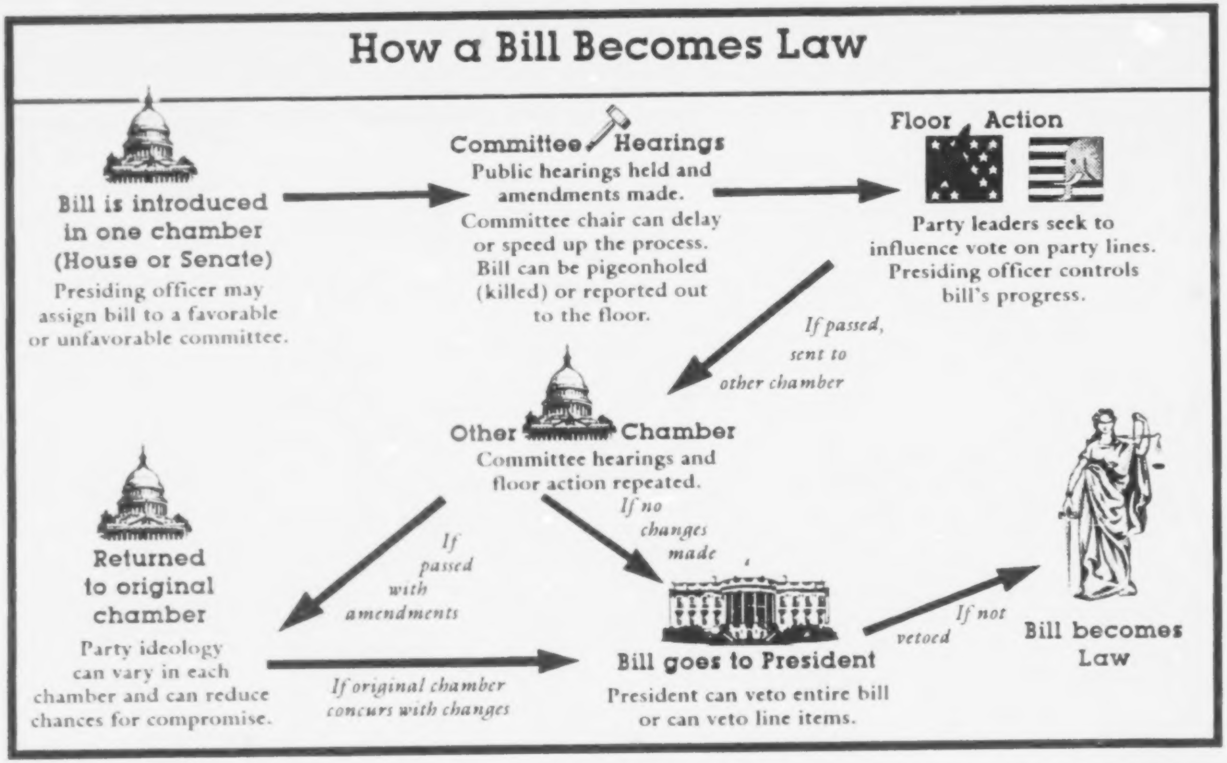
An exciting discussion followed. Two women in the class and one man had found it necessary to get a restraining order issued against someone threatening them on at least one occasion in their own lives.

Students decided to vote either "yea" or "nay" on paper ballots after a short debate. The ballots were then counted and the results proved surprising given the dynamics of the prior discussion. Six students voted to "kill" the bill and four were in favor.

We discussed the reasons for the vote results. Two students said they needed more information and might have voted differently if some of the questions they generated could be answered first. Others were strongly in favor because of their experience with domestic violence or their sympathies for victims. Two of the opponents felt it was an attack on the right to bear arms. One student worried about the police abusing their power if the law passed. The older students, for the most part, were most supportive.

Having "killed" the bill, our journey through the legislature had to end at this point. Many students stated that they felt it was a short amount of time to consider something so important. We were left to consider how difficult it is to move a bill, successfully, through the entire process, and to ponder how much actual discussion and debate underlie most legislative decisions.

Paul Morse taught pre-GED and GED at Second Start in Concord, NH



How a Bill Becomes Law

Bill is introduced in one chamber (House or Senate)
Presiding officer may assign bill to a favorable or unfavorable committee.

Committee Hearings
Public hearings held and amendments made. Committee chair can delay or speed up the process. Bill can be pigeonholed (killed) or reported out to the floor.

Floor Action
Party leaders seek to influence vote on party lines. Presiding officer controls bill's progress.

Other Chamber
Committee hearings and floor action repeated.

Returned to original chamber
Party ideology can vary in each chamber and can reduce chances for compromise.

Bill goes to President
President can veto entire bill or can veto line items.

Bill becomes Law

If passed, sent to other chamber
If passed with amendments
If no changes made
If original chamber concurs with changes
If not vetoed

Reprinted with permission from *The People and the Power Game*, © Hedrick Smith Productions and South Carolina Educational Television.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Comparing Myths and Facts

This activity helps to raise awareness of how myths do influence our thinking.

Write each statement from the handout on a different color paper (e.g. blue = myth, red = fact). Make sure the number of myth/fact pairs corresponds to the number of students. Place the myths and facts in a basket or envelope and have students each pick one. Then ask the students to walk around the room and to read their statement to fellow classmates, asking the students to decide among themselves who has the myth to their fact or the fact to their myth.

Once the students have found their matches, have them place the statements on a wall. All the myths should be in one column and all the corresponding facts should be in an adjacent column. This type of display helps to reinforce the differences between the myths and the facts.

A discussion may follow around what they learned:

- Had they believed some of the myths?
- Were they surprised by the facts?
- What's a myth?
- What are some you know?
- What makes it easy for some myths to stick?
- What do we learn about ourselves by our myths?
- What is something that many people believe but which you think might be a myth?
- How can you research it?
- Do research and report back.

Adapted with permission from an activity in the *Breast and Cervical Cancer Curriculum Sourcebook*. Health and Education in Adult Literacy (HEAL) Project. World Education. Boston. MA

Handout: Myths and Facts about Gun Control and Crime

HANDOUT

Myths and Facts about Gun Control and Crime

Myth: Having a gun makes you safe.
Fact: Having a gun makes you less safe and endangers your loved ones. According to a recent study, a gun in the home triples the likelihood of homicide. A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to be used to commit homicide, suicide, or an accidental killing than it is to be used to kill in self-defense.

Myth: Most violence is racially motivated.
Fact: 83 percent of white victims are slain by white offenders and 94 percent of black victims are slain by black offenders.

Myth: Guns are regulated enough.
Fact: Guns are an unregulated consumer product in the United States. While teddy bears, toasters, and other consumer products all are subject to strict safety regulations, guns are not.

Myth: Most murders occur in the course of another felony.
Fact: Only 22 percent of murders are the result of activities such as rape, robbery, or arson. Almost one third of all murders result from arguments.

Myth: Most gun deaths are homicides.
Fact: In 1991, more Americans died from firearm suicides (18,526) than from firearm homicides (17,746). Between 1968 and 1991, 373,118 American gun deaths were suicides.

Myth: Guns don't kill, people kill.
Fact: According to the FBI, "When assaults by type of weapon are examined, a gun proves to be seven times more deadly than all other weapons combined." In 1990, over 500 children and youths under 20 were killed by guns in accidental shootings.

Source: Children's Defense Fund 1996 website [http://www.childrensdefense.org].

"Campaigning Should Always Be Like This"

by Wendy Quiñones

As an advocate of political and civic participation, I had long harbored a secret dream: a class full of students confidently and knowledgeably talking with an elected official, demanding answers to informed and well-prepared questions of vital importance to their lives. In reality, I had become resigned to my students' cynicism, ignorance, and fundamental disbelief that anything they said could be heard or have an effect. So when one day my students successfully acted out my fantasy, they taught me some things about making it happen again.

Some years ago, I discovered that a good friend of mine was a friend of the candidate challenging the congressman in our district. Jokingly, I asked her what it would take to get him to visit my class. Three days later the campaign called: the candidate would like to visit. Now I was stuck! I knew my students hadn't any idea what a congressperson was, what one did or what the difference was between a candidate and an incumbent. I knew if the candidate talked, they wouldn't understand much of what he said. And I knew that when he asked for questions, they would sit silently and be embarrassed by their silence. Still, I was determined that this opportunity not be wasted. So, my colleagues and I decided we would just have to help the students learn to take advantage of this opportunity.

We had not understood how much time and effort this would take: in the two weeks before the visit, I estimate that we spent 10 to 12 class hours preparing. Even in our 20-hour a week program, that amount of time required justification which we provided by linking every step with specific stated program goals: training in critical thinking, improved writing and public speaking skills, education about government, increased community and political participation. So we took the time.

When the day arrived, I retired to a corner as planned. The student facilitator introduced the candidate and guided him to the seat they had designated for him. The students asked well-informed questions; the candidate was respectful, listened carefully, and answered fully. Several times his staff pointed out that he was running late and should excuse himself, but he refused to leave. "I wish there was some television here," he said. "This is the best event of my whole campaign. This is what I think campaigning should always be like." A few days later, the election results came out so close that they required a recount before the result was final. Our visitor, whose views on issues were much closer to my students' than were the incumbent's, won by fewer than 400 votes. And 17 of those votes had been in the room that day.

The lesson I learned was that impoverished, silenced and marginalized students — and mine were further disempowered by being all women — cannot be expected to improvise a relationship with a representative of power. They need instruction, a cheering section and, most of all, they need practice, practice, and more practice. Students must have a chance to visualize the event, anticipate what will make them uncomfortable, and decide how they might best cope with that discomfort. Decisions that can be made in advance should be made so students will have as much control and as few decisions as possible to make in the actual situation. Who will ask the questions? In what order? Is it okay to have notes to read from? Should they introduce themselves? Here's how we decided to do it the first time and repeatedly afterwards.

In the case of the congressional candidate, we had already covered some aspects of the structure of government, so we set about trying to connect that apparent abstraction to their everyday lives. As it happened, this was the time when welfare reform legislation was pending on both state and national levels, so students could easily see that the candidate might be dealing with things that would affect their lives directly. With that as a starting point, we were able to help students brainstorm a list of issues important to them that a congressperson might work on. This step was crucial.

With the list in place, students began the task of narrowing their questions to a manageable number. This required close examination of what they wanted to ask, and of whether certain questions or issues were contained in or implied by others. It also meant close examination of the appropriateness of some questions. One student, for example, wanted to ask about the difficulties her grandfather was having over his Social Security payment. This led to a discussion of what candidates, congresspeople, or their staffs might be expected to know or do. In the end, the student was reassured that she had a legitimate question and an appropriate place to take it: the staff of the current representative.

With a working list of questions, students then sorted themselves by interest, forming one small group to draft each question and submit it to the class for discussion. One of the most exciting conversations was about whether the questions should be phrased so as to demonstrate the opinion of the group, and thus risk having the candidate answer simply to please us, or to leave him in the dark about his audience's preferences. Students decided they wanted to hear the candidate's own thoughts rather than allow him the option of reflecting theirs. So questions were written and rewritten until everyone was satisfied.

The next step, which proved surprisingly crucial, was role playing. Each student took a turn at delivering the question from their group in the way the group had decided: standing up, introducing herself, and reading the question from notes. It's important for teachers to emphasize that fear and nervousness are perfectly normal, and to discuss the fact that other people can't necessarily see what we're feeling. It's also important to make sure that students give each other positive feedback constructive suggestions ("What if you tried..."), instead of critical comments, ("You shouldn't have..."). If everyone knows this in advance, the (for some) terrifying act of standing up in front of a group becomes much safer. I was surprised: after practicing, several students who had previously refused to ask questions decided that they could, in fact, do it.

The role-playing also pointed out potential problems with questions. One student, for example, asked about a pending bill on an issue of importance to the group. She identified the bill by name and number. What if the candidate wasn't familiar with the bill? she was asked. She was sure he would be. But just in case he isn't, how would you explain it to him? her questioner pressed. The student, although skeptical, did prepare a brief description of the bill and, sure enough, the candidate had never heard of it by name and number.

Students also discussed and decided in advance many of the details of the event. They wanted a student facilitator; one volunteered and practiced her role. Students decided they didn't want to leave the order of their questions to chance; they decided who would speak and when, and that the facilitator would have a master list to call on the questioners in order. We enacted the entire event and decided the best place for the candidate to sit. Students discussed how they should dress. They left almost nothing to chance, and their planning paid off in a smooth, exciting, empowering, and educational event.

But it's not over yet! Debriefing is essential. Some will be convinced they have botched their roles; they need positive feedback from the others. Some will want to comment on the policy-maker, pro or con. If the event has been successful, they need to share their exhilaration; if a failure, they need to commiserate. In either case, they need to evaluate what happened and why. And teachers need to be sure of what learning has actually occurred. One of my students had asked a question about tax policy which resulted in quite a complex answer, and afterwards she bristled that the candidate hadn't answered her. Once the answer was explained, however, she realized he had in fact responded to her quite fully. Rather than feeling ignored and denigrated, she was able to feel respected and empowered after all.

This visit was a watershed event in my class. I like to think that my students' relationship to power was permanently changed; certainly I saw that when we had later visits from policy-makers, they were more than willing to do the preparation necessary and to speak up with less fear and hesitation. My students had learned that they could be important and effective participants in public events.

When she was a journalist covering local government, Wendy Quiñones tried to make the political system accessible to ordinary people, and in ten years of teaching adult education she has tried to do the same thing.

HANDOUT

Learning about Candidates

Reading the Ads

Political candidates put ads in the newspaper and commercials on TV. The ads look good. They try to give the candidate a good image. You need to know more before you pick a candidate. You need to know what the candidate thinks. Do you agree with his or her ideas? How did he vote in the past? What does she want to do if she is elected?

Cut out a newspaper ad for a candidate or tell about an ad you heard on the radio or on TV.

- What do you want to find out from this ad?
- What information did the ad give you?
- How could you check to see if the information is accurate?

Listening to Other People

You may hear that a lot of other people are for a candidate. A group may be for a candidate. Your friends or family may support a candidate. Ask why people are for this candidate.

Talk to at least three other people. Ask what candidate they support and why. Do you think the people you talked to have good reasons? Why or why not?

How to Decide

It can be hard to decide what candidate to vote for. Here is a way to go about making up your mind. The first step is to decide what things matter most to you. List the issues you care the most about. Now find out what the candidates think about your issues.

- What do the candidates think about your issues?
- Which one is closest to your ideas? This may be hard to decide. You may like one candidate's ideas on Issue 1 and another candidate on Issue 2.
- Do you want to vote for any of the candidates? Why or why not?

How Will You Hold Your Candidate Accountable if Elected?

Write down the campaign promises that you want your candidate to keep. How can you find out if the candidate keeps his or her promises? Write down your plan.

Adapted with permission from *Pick Your Candidate* by Debbie Tasker, Dover Adult Learning Center, Dover, NH

77

HANDOUT

Interviewing Tips

When you invite someone to be interviewed, be sure the person knows who you are and why you want to do the interview. This will help the person prepare.

Here are some tips to help you during an interview:

- Introduce yourself again and thank him/her for meeting with you.
- If you are learning English, tell the person where you are from and ask him/her to speak slowly, please.
- Have your questions written down.
- Look at the person when he/she is answering your question.
- If you don't think the person has really answered your question, ask a follow-up question that focuses on what you want to know.
- Feel free to ask any other questions which interest you and which may interest the class.
- Ask for written material that can help you review the information you heard.
- If you don't understand something, ask for clarification. "Excuse me. I don't understand what you just said. Could you say that again, please?" You can also repeat it back to them and ask if you are right. "Do you mean that you would vote against increased adult education funding?"
- Thank the interviewee for his or her time. SMILE!

Adapted with permission from the Leadership to Improve Neighborhood Communication and Services (LINCS) curriculum. Allston-Brighton Healthy Boston Coalition, 1996.

The "Clinic":

A Community Organizes in Philadelphia

by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Philadelphia

The Community Educational Project (CEP) is located in Kensington, formerly a booming manufacturing neighborhood in the Northeast section of Philadelphia. In the seventies, factories started closing down, laying employees off, or moving out of the neighborhood. CEP was established in 1980 in a vacant elementary school building in order to provide education to local residents attempting to return to the work force. Over the next fifteen years, Kensington continued to decline, and 1995 found it a depressed and fairly run-down section of town, a place that made even long-time residents nervous about traveling at night.

The "Clinic" made traveling to CEP, even during the day, precarious. An abandoned rowhouse located diagonally across from the CEP parking lot, the "Clinic" was a notorious hangout for drug dealers and users. Crack vials littered the sidewalk there and for blocks around. Cars had been broken into and women threatened if they passed nearby. Some people had been mugged. Students would detour several blocks in order to enter the CEP building from the other side, especially to avoid exposing their children to that atmosphere and possible harm. The dealers sold their "wares" flagrantly there, seemingly with no fear of the law; the house sported the word "Clinic" and an arrow pointing to the door in neon spray paint.

While learners, staff, and community members alike often complained about the crackhouse, they did nothing for years. A few people had called the police, who claimed that they could not make arrests unless someone was "caught in the act." Soon most residents gave up trying and learned to live with the nuisance and fear. "Besides," they said, "the cops chase them off and they just come back the next day." People cared but had become frustrated and did not believe that they could make a change.

Then CEP became part of a Kensington community action network. This collaboration of groups and individuals agreed to take on the Clinic. One of the interesting things about Kensington is its ethnic and racial diversity, a population that includes Latinos, African-Americans, Southeast Asian-Americans, and European-Americans. Diverse ethnic populations can sometimes be at odds with each other, but in this case, a common cause brought them together.

A meeting was called by the network and held in the CEP building. Learners were at first reticent to attend the meeting when informed about it. Many of them had never been to a community or organizing meeting and were either nervous about it or "didn't see the point." Learners and instructors engaged in class discussions, starting first from students' experiences, asking if any had ever had or knew about successful strategies to "make a difference" on a community issue. Stories were shared. Some teachers brought in current newspaper or magazine articles or historical case studies of citizen action which were read, discussed, and written about in classes. Reflection on these led learners to be more open to the possibility of change. Some decided to attend the meeting.

The first meeting was an airing of the issue in which everyone got to speak about both the problem and also offer solutions. This participation in and of itself, the "entering into the public debate," seemed empowering to those attending. Many had never felt listened to and valued in reference to a public issue. Strategies were brainstormed, and the group decided to request a meeting with the Philadelphia Police Sergeant in charge of the area, as well as the officers who usually worked that beat. One student volunteered to be on the contact committee that gathered the police force information and made the phone calls. Another was on the committee that contacted the media.

Before the meeting with the police, neighborhood residents who were more experienced in organizing reviewed the strategies which the group intended to use with the police:

- speaking from an attitude of collaboration and "win-win" negotiation
- using clear communication to advocate for the needs of the community
- not lapsing into complaining but focusing on the issue in order to specify solutions during the "speakout" time
- keeping the focus on results which the police could help effect as opposed to railing against the city or the "pipers"
- and accepting responsibility for the network's part in keeping the neighborhood safe while continuing to assert the community's right to protection from the police

The meeting was effective. Community members, including CEP students, told moving stories and critically but respectfully challenged the police policy of not arresting known drug dealers. "I know," one student said, "that if this was happening on the Main Line (a wealthier neighborhood bordering Philadelphia) you all would find a way to arrest the guys who were doing it." (During a later class trip to the library, students researched Americans' rights under the law versus policies, and discussed which were enforced when, which could be changed and how.) The police agreed to more frequent sweeps through the area, including signing in to a log when they came through. They and community members agreed to collaborate in a community policing effort. Finally, all agreed to have a future meeting in several months' time to discuss the effects of these actions. A story about the meeting was reported in the local weekly newspaper.

Learners who attended the meeting shared their experiences with classmates. It was evident that the experience had had an effect on their attitudes as well as their knowledge and skills. They had first-hand knowledge of an effective citizen action which would have concrete results in their own lives. They could not help but believe that they could make a difference. They had not heard the news; they were news! Some had learned more about the law enforcement system, others about media. Everyone had had opportunities to think critically about city government, economics (from law enforcement spending in their neighborhood to the economics of dealing drugs), and community history. In groups or individually, people honed reading, writing, computer, communication, information "processing," and participation skills.

By the spring of 1996, the Clinic was shut down. Its windows and doors were boarded up and the graffiti painted over. Community residents expressed that the area felt safer for themselves and their children. CEP learners expressed pride and a sense of responsibility in being a part of this contribution to their neighborhood.

Reprinted with permission from the Mayor's Commission on Literacy's Equipped for the Future *Content/Standards Report* to the National Institute for Literacy, 1996. This "case study" is a composite of various inquiry-based citizenship educational experiences but is most closely based on an actual series of events which occurred at CWEP, an educational project in Kensington, a section of Philadelphia, PA.

HANDOUT

Strategies for Influencing Others

We all use strategies every day. How would you explain to someone what the word "strategy" means? (Use the dictionary if your group needs help.) Often, we try to use effective strategies to influence others. Some strategies work better than others. Brainstorm a list of strategies that have worked for you. Demonstrate by acting out specific scenes, if you'd like.

Look at the short list of strategies (below) and describe each one in your own words. Talk about times you have seen these strategies used. Then compare them to the group list that you made above. How are the two lists the same or different?

Strategy: Speak from a spirit of collaboration and "win-win" negotiation.

My words: ____________________

____

Strategy: Use clear communication to advocate for what you want.

My words: ____________________

____

Strategy: Rather than complaining or blaming, focus on identifying solutions.

My words: ____________________

____

Strategy: Accept responsibility for your part of the solution, but be clear that you expect others to be accountable for their responsibilities, also.

My words: ____________________

____

PREP AND PRACTICE

Participating in Public Forums

Attending community meetings, or meeting with officials can be disappointing and frustrating if you don't know what to expect. People are often disappointed because they expected to get more accomplished or didn't know that the issue they are concerned about was the fourth item on a long agenda. This can be avoided by preparing well for what's going to happen.

1. Ask people to share their experiences of community meetings or meetings with officials. What kind of meeting was it (community meeting, council meeting, hearing, etc.)? What are the similarities and differences in the experiences?

2. Regarding a particular meeting you would like to attend, think about:

   - What kind of meeting is this?
   - Who is sponsoring the meeting and what can you predict from that?
   - Is the meeting about one issue or several? (Can you get an agenda?)
   - How will people participate?
   - What are the objectives of the meeting? To discuss ideas? To hear testimony? To make a group decision? Etc..
   - How do you feel about going to the meeting? What would make you feel more comfortable being there? Participating?

Dialogue Day:

Teens Have Their Say

by Stephanie Menard

In an effort to involve high school students and the community in school reform and visioning, a public high school in Vermont scheduled an event called Dialogue Day. At this event, small student discussion groups, led by trained facilitators from the school and community, were formed to focus on the strengths of their school and to identify areas for improvement. The intent was to organize six priority areas that school and community teams would work on in the coming year. The event was an impressive and important step in creating a partnership between the community and the school system but failed to involve some of the most important voices in the community – those whose negative experiences in school caused them to completely leave the high school or seek alternative ways of graduating.

As an adult literacy teacher, the question for me soon became how to involve these disenfranchised teens and adults in this important dialogue – to let their unique perspective and stories be heard and to encourage them to take this opportunity to make real change. Carly, an area provider serving street teens, and I decided to team up to facilitate a dialogue day of our own. At our local community center, we assembled a group of fifteen participants interested in sharing stories about why they left the high school. It was a highly emotional meeting as their stories of anger, confusion, and humiliation filled the room. Discrimination and labeling by school staff, drug and alcohol issues, and poor communication were common themes. As each participant spoke, their story was recorded in their own words and posted around the room. At the break, the group continued to share informally and it was clear that they felt bound together by similar experiences.

As we reconvened, we asked them to look around the room at the recorded stories and pull out themes. These themes were recorded and then translated into concrete suggestions to give to the high school (see chart). An hour later, the group had generated a lengthy list, but still felt there was more to cover. Everyone agreed that another meeting was needed.

The group met together two more times. The action plan was reviewed, edited and categorized into four distinct sections that included teaching issues, drugs and alcohol, conflict resolution, and new school programs. The group also began discussing the best way to present the plan to the high school. Concerns surfaced that the school would not listen to them and never would follow through on their suggestions. As this had been their past experience, it was difficult for us as facilitators to help them to believe that they could make change if they stayed united and went through the right channels. Although skeptical, the group continued on and decided to call a meeting with the school principal, a guidance counselor, and school board member. They elected three teens and two adults to become spokespersons for their group.

To prepare for this meeting, we had lengthy conversations about using neutral language to make our points and about the benefits of presenting concrete suggestions rather than complaints. We also talked about the importance of volunteering to be part of the solution when advocating for change.

The action plan was presented by the spokespersons in a completely professional manner. The representatives of the school system were impressed by their passion and by the work done by the group. They indicated that they could pursue a few of their suggestions, one of which was employing a drug and alcohol counselor at the school. Carly and I helped the school by researching existing programs and exploring potential funding. Months later we were relieved to find out that the group's suggestion was going to become a reality. They were advertising for a new position.

It is still exciting to look back at what that group accomplished. We had intended to only hold one meeting and were surprised by the snowball effect this topic created. Perhaps more important than the skills that participants acquired during this time, was the process of healing that began with their sharing and the power that came with making a change in the system that had haunted them for years. This is what made the intense commitment of time and energy on my part all worthwhile.

Stephanie Menard has taught adult education for Even Start, a family literacy program, and now coordinates an adult basic education program in Northern Vermont.

GRIEVANCES	PROPOSALS
• Teachers and administrators have physically and verbally abused students. • Students are labeled by their family name and history. They expect you to be like your brothers, sisters, or parents. • A teacher kept calling me at 6:30 in the morning to see if I was coming to school. I felt like the teacher didn't trust me and was hounding me.	**Theme: Conflict Resolution** We need a process in place where both teachers and students could work out their concerns and conflict in a confidential and safe manner. A cross-section of the school community needs to be involved in designing this process.
• When I was suspended for 30 days in the seventh grade and came back to school, they told me not to come back. This was in October. • The Planning Room doesn't help. Kids want to go there to hang out. • Teachers sometimes automatically send kids to the Planning Room before a problem has even happened.	**Theme: New Programs** We are suggesting that the entire discipline process be revamped and the effectiveness of the Planning Room be looked at. Possibly a separate room for in-school-suspension should be set aside.
• Everyone there looks the other way when kids teachers are having problems with drugs, alcohol and sex. • My kids' problems with drugs and alcohol surfaced when they got to that school and the blame was put on me as a parent.	**Theme: Drugs and Alcohol** We need to have a good drug and alcohol person available to kids all day long, five days a week. We need a person who has gone through these experiences and for this person to be there for support and not to lecture or just give out information. We would like a cross-section of the school community involved in the hiring of this person.
• Many teachers behave inappropriately. Some do drugs with students, drink on the job, and sexually harass students. • The teachers aren't teaching us the way we need them to. They get stuck in their own style for years and don't adapt to the needs of the students.	**Theme: Teaching Issues** We need a plan to be implemented to evaluate teachers frequently and randomly. Perhaps parents could be involved in this process.

HANDOUT

From Grievances to Proposals

In order to understand a situation well enough to offer thoughtful suggestions, we often need to research it thoroughly. For activities about doing research, see "Researching History and Current Issues" on page 33, and "Asking the Right Questions" on page 142. At other times our own experience, and the experiences of people we know, give us enough information to form powerful insights and ideas for change.

The proposals in the handout on page 77 are based on the collectively analyzed experiences of people who had difficulty in a particular high school. Some of their suggestions are about **what** should happen:

"We need to have a good drug and alcohol person available to kids all day long..." These suggestions address particular problems, one at a time. Other suggestions speak to **how** decisions should be made: "A cross-section of the school community needs to be involved . . ." These recommendations may lead to a long-lasting shift in the balance of power, as the whole way of "doing business" is being called into question.

The following activity gives people practice at offering (and distinguishing) both kinds of solutions. It also offers the opportunity to reshape our complaints into constructive proposals for change.

Instructions:

1. Pick a situation that is a problem for you and others in your group. Brainstorm your grievances and write them on separate slips of paper.
2. See if your grievances can be grouped into categories or themes. Give each category a name.
3. Look at one category at a time, and see if you can think of ways the situation should change. What would you like to see? What would address your grievances? Who should be making decisions about this issue? How?
4. Present your proposals to the other groups. Discuss the kind of change (fixing a specific problem or changing the relationships of power) you were seeking and why.

Section 3

Building Community by Helping Others

Section Introduction

Helping Neighbors in a Crisis

Prejudice in a Small Town

Section 3: Introduction

The examples in this section draw primarily upon the following skills and activities.

EFF Common Activities

- ✓ Gather, Analyze, and Use Information
- ✓ Manage Resources
- ___ Work Within the Big Picture
- ___ Work Together
- ___ Provide Leadership
- ✓ Guide and Support Others
- ___ Seek Guidance and Support from Others
- ___ Develop and Express Sense of Self
- ✓ Respect Others and Value Diversity
- ___ Exercise Rights and Responsibilities
- ___ Create and Pursue Vision and Goals
- ___ Use Technology & Other Tools to Accomplish Goals
- ___ Keep Pace with Change

EFF Skills

Communication Skills

- ___ Read with Understanding
- ___ Convey Ideas in Writing
- ___ Speak So Others Can Understand
- ✓ Listen Actively
- ✓ Observe Critically

Decision Making Skills

- ___ Use Math to Solve Problems & Communicate
- ✓ Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- ✓ Plan

Interpersonal Skills

- ___ Cooperate with Others
- ___ Advocate and Influence
- ___ Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- ___ Guide Others

Lifelong Learning Skills

- ___ Take Responsibility for Learning
- ✓ Reflect and Evaluate
- ✓ Learn through Research
- ___ Use Information & Communication Technology

"Community" may be something we feel part of, automatically, by our membership in a particular group – neighbors on a street, an ethnic group, co-workers, etc. But as our worlds become more diverse and our lives more mobile, we are more likely to enter and exit many communities where we need to consciously build new bonds and shared experiences.

One basic aspect of building community is showing those around us that we consider them – that they are not invisible to us. The two accounts in this section are about this acknowledgement. They are about people who notice what is happening to their neighbors and act to support them.

Here are some other questions to keep in mind as you review this section:

1. What does helping people mean to you?
2. In what ways is our own well-being linked to the well-being of others?
3. What about conflicting needs or interests?
4. What are some strengths and limitations of helping others as a way to improve community?

Helping Neighbors in a Crisis

by Silja Kallenbach, based on the writings of Maggie Moreno

When Maggie Moreno's ESOL class in Baytown, Texas read in a newspaper about a family who had lost almost all their belongings when their house burned down, they wanted to help. Their hearts went out for the Granderson family with four children ages 12 to 21 and a five-year-old grandson. They did not know the family, but they knew this kind of hardship could happen to anyone.

Finding Information

Maggie, the teacher, offered to call the Granderson family to find out what they needed the most. Mrs. Granderson was surprised by these immigrant adults' interest in her family's plight. She said that they could really use a table and chairs. The students felt that they needed to find out how much a table and four chairs would cost. In class, they practiced different ways of asking for this information and explaining their project. They looked up names and phone numbers of different furniture stores in the yellow pages phone book. Eight students volunteered to call a furniture store. They reported back to class the furniture prices and other information they had learned.

Planning Action

The class decided that they wanted to raise money to buy a table and four chairs to help the Granderson family. One student suggested a food sale and another a raffle. A few days later, Socorro, a student, surprised the class with a crochet tablecloth she had made and wanted to donate for the raffle. Socorro's tablecloth and a food basket became the prizes for the raffle. The students decided that each raffle ticket would be $1 and there would be 150 numbers. Since some students could not participate in the raffle because of their religion, the class decided to hold a cake sale as well.

The next step was to plan all the necessary tasks and who would do them. The tasks included selling tickets, cutting and serving cake, serving coffee, being a cashier and cleaning up. It was clear that everyone should help sell tickets. That meant they needed to talk to other classes about the project. They needed to decide what to say and practice it. They divided the class into six teams that went to speak to the other classes at the learning center.

Taking Action

Talking to the other classes was a good opportunity to practice English, but it made the students nervous. What if the other students couldn't understand them? What if they forgot what to say? Hugo, for example, paced up and down the hallway practicing his presentation. The students' courage paid off. They made $140 in half an hour selling raffle tickets and another $150 from the food sale! This made for a truly engaging lesson on counting in English. Counting the money led to a lesson on making bank deposits and withdrawals.

Unexpectedly, a friend of a student donated a table and chairs. Four students took responsibility for picking them up. This gave rise to a lesson on map reading and writing directions in English. With the money they had raised the students bought a sofa. They then invited Mrs. Granderson to visit their class.

When Mrs. Granderson arrived and saw what the students had done for her family she was speechless. She had no idea that the students were going to give her all this furniture. She thought that she was just coming to meet them. She was very touched. She told the students that now she too can go back to school because she has a place to do her homework. The students were delighted with what she said, and that they could understand her English. Everyone was moved by the meeting.

Mrs. Granderson then invited everyone to come with her to see her apartment. The students and Maggie piled into cars to go visit the Grandersons, and two students with trucks brought the furniture. When they arrived at the apartment they saw how the family truly did not have any furniture, and what a difference the furniture made. It was very real how by working together they had improved this family's life. They took pictures to commemorate the event. Everyone felt proud and excited.

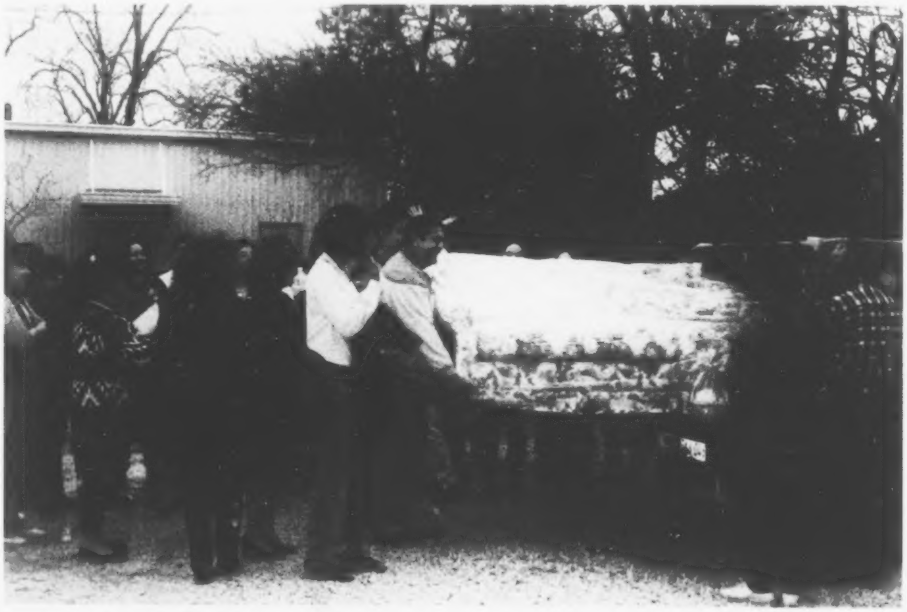
Reflecting on the Action

Back in class, students talked about what they had accomplished and still needed to do. The student reactions about the public speaking to other classes ranged from "very proud" to "less nervous because I am more confident now" to "disappointed because I couldn't say easily what I wanted to say."

An important remaining task was to thank everyone who had helped. The class decided that the same teams should go to each class they had visited before and thank them for their generosity and tell them what was accomplished. They also wrote thank you letters to everyone who donated to the project. That was yet another valuable English lesson.

Finally, they recorded how all class members had contributed to the project. This showed that it had truly been a group effort. It was an unforgettable English class. There was no question that helping others can be a good and meaningful way to learn English.

Note: Mrs. Granderson has since returned to school and is enrolled in ABE classes. Silja Kallenbach is the Coordinator of the New England Literacy Resource Center in Boston, MA. Maggie Moreno teaches at Harris County Adult Education in Baytown, TX.



Students surprising Mrs. Granderson with a "brand new sofa" bought with raffle and food money.

HANDOUT

Making an Action Plan

Here are the steps:

1. Clearly say what you want to accomplish.
2. Figure out the tasks that need to be done and in what order.
3. Figure out a schedule for completing each task.
4. Assign people to each task.
5. Decide how they will do it. What kind of help do they need?
6. Check off when the task has been done.
7. Review the plan regularly to see if it still makes sense.

What we want to accomplish:

	Task	By when?	Who will do it?	How?	✓
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

Plan was reviewed on these dates:

HANDOUT

Budgeting Resources

Example: Budget for a community meeting

What we need	Estimated cost	Who could donate?
Space for meeting	Donated	YWCA, food co-op
Copying flyers	$ 15.00	
Community dinner	$ 85.00	
Childcare	Donated	3 volunteers from our class
Total Cost:	$100.00	

Budget questions:

1. How much money will the group have to raise each week?
   Total cost ÷ number of weeks = $ you need to raise each week
   (Example: $100 ÷ 4 weeks = $25 to raise each week)

2. How much money will each person have to raise?
   Total cost ÷ number of people = $ each person needs to raise
   (Example: $100 ÷ 20 people = $5 each person needs to raise)

3. Your question:

Continued on next page

92

HANDOUT

Your Budget

What we need	Estimated cost	Who could donate?
	Total Cost: $	

4. What questions can you answer by looking at your budget?

Prejudice in a Small Town

by Douglas Griffith

One of my employees and I were working in a New England town installing vinyl siding. It was a very warm spring day, the type of day on which you drink a lot of water and complain about the heat. After we had finished the job, we stopped to have an ice cream cone.

We pulled into the ice cream shop and noticed it was a little busy. The people in line included a black woman and her young daughter, who looked to be about eight or nine. As I got in line to get our ice cream cones, I noticed how friendly the man serving the ice cream was to his customers. He would serve the ice cream and then take their money.

When it came time for the black woman to order, the man serving the ice cream asked her very rudely what she wanted. She told him, and he asked her for the money, before he would fix the ice cream cone. She paid him, and he then gave her the cone. It was the little girl's turn next, and he had the same attitude with her. He harshly demanded the money and then gave her the ice cream. I could see the hurt and disappointment in the little girl's eyes. The man never said "thank you" to them even though he had done so to the white people he had served.

When it was my turn, I approached the window. He asked in a very friendly manner what he could get for me. I told him what I wanted, but I also explained to him that I thought he had been quite rude to the black woman and her child. He did not seem to care.

After saying goodbye to my friend, I got back into my vehicle and drove down the main street of Lancaster, hoping to find the woman and her daughter. I spotted them walking on the sidewalk, and I pulled my vehicle over, got out, and approached them. I introduced myself, and she did the same. I expressed my disappointment in the way she and her daughter had been rudely treated at the ice cream shop and explained that I didn't think this was characteristic of how other people in town would behave. She told me that he had been like that before, and she thanked me for stopping. But I can't forget the look in that little girl's eyes. I could only picture how I would feel if that had been one of my own children.

As a child, I experienced discrimination, and I know the effect it can have. I can remember when I was in the sixth grade at a Catholic grammar school. One of my fellow students nominated me for a class officer position. After he had nominated me, the nun spoke up and said, "This is an important position, and I think you should be careful whom you nominate," leaving the impression that because of the neighborhood I came from, I was not capable of handling that position. My name was removed from the list of nominees. That was over forty-five years ago, and I still remember the hurt I felt.

I guess that's why I felt I needed to speak up and show my concern. What happened at the ice cream shop may seem like a minor incident to some people, but through the eyes of the young girl, it may not have been so minor. It brings me back to what happened to me as a child.

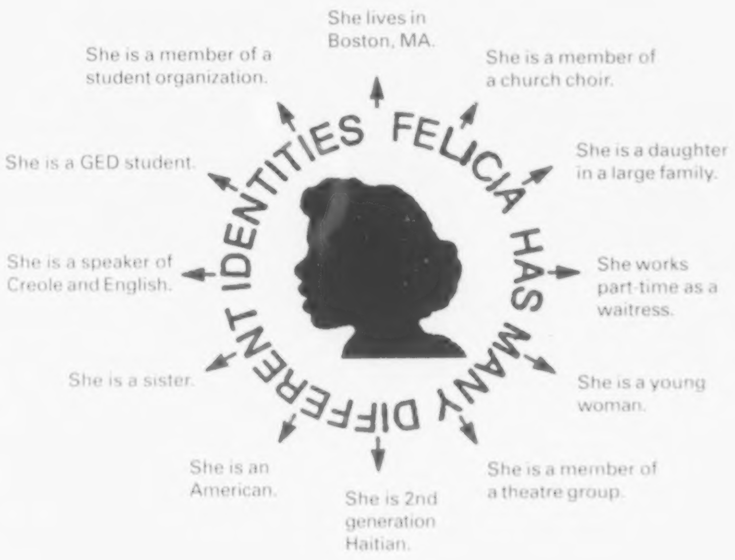
Douglas Griffith was a student at Second Start in Concord, NH in the spring of 1998. He obtained his GED in June, 1998 and graduated with his wife and grown children all in attendance. He was encouraged to get his GED by his daughter.

Reprinted with permission from *The Change Agent*, Issue 8, February 1999 and the author.

HANDOUT

Who Are You?

We all belong to many different groups and communities which help to form our individual identities. Any one person has a number of different identities. For example, a man may be all of the following: son, husband, uncle, father, worker, English speaker, Muslim. Some of our identities may play a more central role in our lives than others, and they may change over the course of a lifetime. Each of our identities gives us social rights as well as responsibilities.

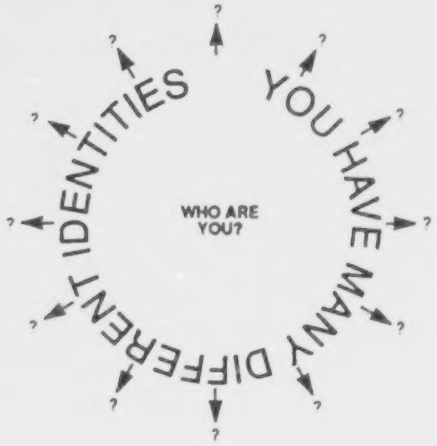

FELICIA HAS MANY DIFFERENT IDENTITIES
She lives in Boston, MA.
She is a member of a church choir.
She is a daughter in a large family.
She works part-time as a waitress.
She is a young woman.
She is a member of a theatre group.
She is 2nd generation Haitian.
She is an American.
She is a sister.
She is a speaker of Creole and English.
She is a GED student.
She is a member of a student organization.

Sometimes Felicia finds that her multiple identities make conflicting demands on her. For example, as a daughter in a Haitian family, she is expected to spend a lot of time at home with family. As an active student and performer, she often needs to be away from home.

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

Now do one for yourself



- List or draw your different identities.
- Which ones feel most important to you?
- Can you give examples of conflicting demands made by your different social identities?
- In which of your identities do you feel powerful?
- In which do you not feel powerful?
- Pick one group: How do you know who is in the group? What things may make people feel excluded from this group?

Adapted from *Language, Identity and Power* by Hilary Janks, Witwatersrand University Press

PREP AND PRACTICE

Personal Cultural History

Objectives:

1. To help participants recall and reflect on their earliest significant experiences of race, culture, and difference.
2. To help participants make connections between their own experiences and those of people different from themselves.

Procedure:

1. Give each participant a sheet of newsprint. Ask them to answer the following questions using drawings, symbols, and colors, rather than words.

    - What is your racial and ethnic identity?
    - When did you first become aware of your own race?
    - How did you learn what racism is?

2. After they are finished, have participants in groups of four or five tell their stories using their drawings. Others in the group may ask only factual questions. When the participants have told their story, ask them to tape the drawing on the board or wall.

3. After all have shared their stories, ask participants to discuss the following:

    - What similarities and differences do you notice in the experiences?
    - How did discrimination and prejudice affect participants' lives?
    - If they weren't noticeably affected, why weren't they?
    - How do you think your race affects you today?

4. As a large group, discuss how early experiences affect a person's outlook later in life. What have they learned in this exercise that could change the way they relate to another participant in the class?

Adapted from "Personal Cultural History Exercise" by Margo Okazawa-Rey in *Beyond Heroes and Holidays*, Network of Educators on the Americas, 1998.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Counteracting Stereotypes

This is one of many activities that can help you counteract stereotypes and address ugly comments.

1. Brainstorm the groups to which you belong.
2. Pick one and begin listing all of the stereotypical attributes of that group.
3. Then make a list of the ways in which you are and are not like that.
4. Think of a time when someone made mistaken assumptions about you. Tell the story of the interaction and what upset you about it.
5. To practice using your story, role play with someone a situation where your partner makes a comment like, "You've got to admit that welfare mothers don't want to work. They have kids to avoid it." Use a starter for your story like, "When you say that, it reminds me of how..."

While this formula doesn't present the speaker with new facts, it does communicate the pain in being characterized by negative stereotypes. It also highlights the way stereotypes make individuals feel invisible. Further, it sidesteps a direct confrontation which can make the original speaker more rigid or defensive.

Adapted from an activity designed by Annie Goglia, a storyteller/coach who leads workshops on issues of gender and sexuality in the Boston area.

HANDOUT

Conflict Resolution Skills:

Turning Down the Heat on Arguments

Can you imagine that you will never have another argument with anyone? Whether we like it or not, conflict is a fact of life. It is how we handle conflict that is important. Do you blow your top off? Do you try to avoid conflict? Do you try to win the other person to your side? Most of us have used all these strategies at one time or another. And most of us tend to fall back on one way.

The Conflict Resolution Skills Manual, by the Center for Literacy in Philadelphia, explains that conflict resolution refers to a process of trying to settle arguments peacefully and constructively. For conflict resolution to succeed, the people who are involved have to act very differently from what may feel natural in the heat of the moment. They may have to listen to other people's ideas and feelings, even if they seem stupid. They may have to try to give the other side some of what they want. And they will have to take their time. An argument can be over in fifteen minutes, but conflict resolution can take days.

Look at the following strategies for resolving conflict and then use them to assess your own skills.

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

Five Principles for Resolving Conflicts

1. Communicate
For conflict to be resolved, those involved have to understand each other. When one person is speaking, the others must be actively listening. Checking in as you go along helps you to know how the communication is going.

2. Don't struggle over power – it's deadly
Sometimes people care more about who wins and who loses than they do about resolving the conflict. The conflict heats up or escalates. The chances that anyone will solve the problem in a power struggle are not very good.

3. Take responsibility for feelings and issues
It is important that everyone involved take responsibility for his or her part in the conflict. If mean words were spoken, perhaps an apology is needed. If it has been agreed to save money to buy a car and the money is lost in a poker game, this has to be admitted.

4. Separate feelings from issues
Cooling off time is essential when emotions are high. Getting clear on the issues will help prevent emotions from taking over the discussion.

5. Keep inventing solutions
Many times in arguments we forget to be creative because we are busy defending ourselves from the other people in the conflict. We need to remember that there is often more than one answer to a problem.

Questions for Discussion:
- Who do you argue with?
- What do you argue about?
- How do you act in an argument?
- Which of the behaviors you listed resolve conflict? Which do not?

Adapted with permission from *Conflict Resolution Skills Manual* by Monty Wilson, Center for Literacy, Philadelphia, PA 1993.

HANDOUT

Communication Skills Activity

Even when a person is trying to listen, he or she can misunderstand. To avoid misunderstanding it is helpful to check with the speaker, and summarize or restate his or her main points. For each of the following angry statements, either restate the idea, reflect the emotion, or ask a clarifying question. Then create some examples of your own.

Example
Speaker 1: You are such a jerk. Why can't you ever get here on time?
Emotion: Anger and frustration
Idea: He is tired of the other person always being late.
Speaker 2: I know you are mad because I'm late. Can we talk about this later when you are not going to rip my head off?

Now try out reflecting and restating for yourself.

Speaker 1: If you're not going to show up to do the work, we'll do this project without you.
Emotion:
Idea:
Speaker 2:

Speaker 1: Nobody ever likes my idea. It's not fair.
Emotion:
Idea:
Speaker 2:

Adapted with permission from *Conflict Resolution Skills Manual* by Monty Wilson, Center for Literacy, Philadelphia, PA 1993

Section 4

Expressing Ourselves and Educating Others

Section Introduction

Investigating AIDS and Taking Action

Saying What is True: Women Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

Women Create Knowledge: Participatory Action Research and Breast Cancer

Project Hope Students Teach Others about Welfare Reform

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities

Section 4: Introduction

The examples in this section draw primarily upon the following skills and activities.

EFF Common Activities

✓ Gather, Analyze, and Use Information
___ Manage Resources
___ Work Within the Big Picture
✓ Work Together
___ Provide Leadership
✓ Guide and Support Others
___ Seek Guidance and Support from Others
✓ Develop and Express Sense of Self
___ Respect Others and Value Diversity
___ Exercise Rights and Responsibilities
✓ Create and Pursue Vision and Goals
___ Use Technology & Other Tools to Accomplish Goals
___ Keep Pace with Change

EFF Skills

Communication Skills

✓ Read with Understanding
✓ Convey Ideas in Writing
✓ Speak So Others Can Understand
✓ Listen Actively
✓ Observe Critically

Decision Making Skills

___ Use Math to Solve Problems & Communicate
___ Solve Problems and Make Decisions
___ Plan

Interpersonal Skills

___ Cooperate with Others
___ Advocate and Influence
___ Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
___ Guide Others

Lifelong Learning Skills

___ Take Responsibility for Learning
✓ Reflect and Evaluate
✓ Learn through Research
___ Use Information & Communication Technology

These five accounts explore a common process of people deciding to do some form of community education because their experiences have been left out of the public discourse about an issue. We see that the first step in the process is to find our personal connection to a topic or issue. How has it touched our lives and what do we want to tell others about it? How do we make sense of new information in light of our own experiences, and how do we help others do the same?

The stories and "prep and practice" activities in this section address the skills needed to listen to people's experiences, examine and clarify our own perspectives, analyze information from other sources, and determine the stories and messages we want to share with others.

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you review this section:

1. How do we balance critical examination of ideas and experiences with non-critical support for people expressing themselves?
2. What is the value in bringing our knowledge to others?

Investigating AIDS and Taking Action

by Rachel Martin

Editor's note: In 1989, when Rachel Martin wrote this piece, she described The Women's School as "a small literacy program in West Philadelphia." The poor and working class black women who came to her reading and writing class ranged in age from 17 to 68 years old.

The first day we began talking about AIDS in my Women's School class, I sensed an intense feeling in the room. I suggested we stop what we were doing and each write down our fears about AIDS. Some of us were worried about earlier blood transfusions; others about whether our male partners were maintaining pledges of monogamy. As always, no one was required to share their writing, and some didn't. But for all of us, just letting the pen move and naming our fears seemed to provide a kind of catharsis that allowed us to go on.

We then returned to our initial list of questions, which included:

- What is AIDS?
- How do you get it?
- How do you protect yourself?
- Why are Black and Latino people getting it more than others?
- Why isn't there a cure?
- If they find a cure, will the government pay or let people die?
- Is it safe to be near someone with AIDS?

Each person decided which of the questions she wanted to investigate. We read articles people brought in from the newspaper, as well as pamphlets I found. It gradually became clear that the lines I'd drawn in my head between personal, political and practical issues were blurred. After learning about self-protection, there came the question of what to do if you're a heterosexual woman who wants to use a condom, and the man you're having sex with refuses. While the educational literature available on AIDS today includes many community-oriented brochures and booklets that address the range of issues that come up when AIDS is considered, the literature available at that time concealed the underlying issues. It also left untouched political questions, such as why there is no cure. And many of the pamphlets were full of "medicalese." We wended our way through dense language and attempted to puzzle out the more difficult medical questions, as well as the political ones. After a few weeks, I made the suggestion that we write our own pamphlet on AIDS – one that would be easier to read and, in addition to giving some basic information, would take on the deeper questions.

The women didn't have a general perception of themselves as authoritative writers at that time – though I believe they began to in the process of writing the pamphlet. Once I made the suggestion, they jumped on the idea, and we began.

We first decided to organize the pamphlet by stating our initial questions and presenting some of the answers we found. We pulled out all the writings we'd done since we'd started the investigation. In most cases, more than one person had worked on a question. The writers got together and decided how to combine their writings into one, considering the most important things to say and an order for saying them. We looked back at the initial writings about our fears and decided they would set the stage for the question/answer section. And we chose to use letters a few people had written as the cornerstone for "A Special Note to Men." (These had been written during a discussion about condoms and the fear of talking about them with a male partner.) An in-class writing of mine became "A Note to Sisters."

I want to add that throughout the process above, there was a recognition of a link between black and gay oppression. This was both overtly expressed in "Why Isn't There a Cure?" and implied when the women decided to follow the suggestion of one student who said that if we were going to capitalize the word "Black," we should also capitalize "Gay." But all was not ideal. African-Americans and gays were written about as though mutually exclusive, and the pamphlet didn't address lesbian women, due in some measure to my failure to lead an in-depth look at homophobic assumptions.

The board of The Women's School gave us $100 for paper and copying. We inserted the pamphlet into the 1,100 copies of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, which Mildred's son delivered, and took the rest to West Philly pizza parlors, grocery stores, beauty salons, and churches.

We never really learned the impact our words had on the neighbors we reached. Our primary aim had been to explore our own thoughts and questions and to encourage others to do the same. We hope we did that.

Rachel Martin is a teacher, researcher, curriculum developer, and writer.

A SPECIAL NOTE TO MEN

To whom it may concern,

I, Claudia, am very concerned about this virus called AIDS. My opinion, for all women is if you have a husband or lover, I suggest now is the time to sit him down and have a very serious talk with him about AIDS. If he refuses to listen the first time, don't give up. It's for our own good that we are persistant about this. This is our lives to live. Although we may feel that we might have known someone for some time, there are still things we don't know about each other. I insist that we make it clear how important it is to protect ourselves the best way we can, by using condoms.

Steve,

I know we have been together for thirteen years. But with AIDS going around, I'm afraid. I'm not saying you're messing around, but I want to be protected. So will you wear a condom?

love,
Joanne

To Whom It May Concern,

Love, we have a problem. But you know and I know that we do love each other. I think we should start using condoms because we do love each other. If we do not get AIDS, we will not have it. OK? It's for real. AIDS is the problem I'm talking about.

Mildred

A NOTE TO SISTERS

I'm afraid to take any chances. If a man I want to sleep with doesn't see the importance of using a condom, forget it. Even before the AIDS scare, I expected a man to be willing to use a condom just as often as I was willing to use a diaphragm. It definitely takes some of the pleasure away if I am the only one having to worry about the birth control. I want a man to believe it's as much his responsibility as mine.

Rachel

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO GETTING HELP FROM THE GOVERNMENT, NOT PROMISES:

We need money
We need more treatment centers in Philadelphia
We need more research
We need more educators to let people know that you don't get AIDS by snapping your fingers

Together, as a body, we need to help make the government listen!

BEBASHI CAN HELP

BEBASHI (Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health) is the only minority outreach network that gives reliable AIDS information. **BEBASHI** also lobbies for more responsible government policies on AIDS. **BEBASHI** understands the specific needs of the Black community, but offers AIDS education to everyone in the Philadelphia community.

For more information, call 546-4140.
All calls are confidential.

I do hope soon that we will have all the facts and cures for this matter. It will bring me the most joyful peace of mind for my children's future and for all of us on this earth.

Salina

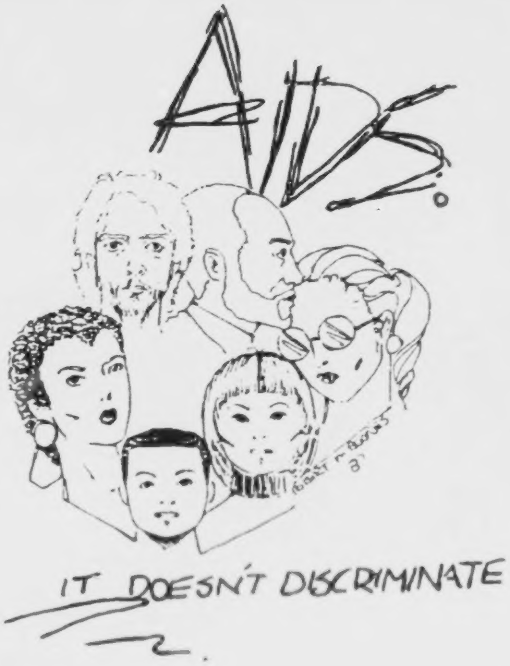
✶

Written by:

Claudia
Joanne
Kenyatta
Mattie
Mildred
Omelia
Peggie
Rachel
Salina

Members of the Reading and Writing Class
at

The Women's School
815 S. 48th Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19143
727-0830



We are concerned women at The Women's School that are trying to get AIDS to be a concern of everybody else. The Women's School is a school of education where we have learned about such things as health, rape, government, and Central America through reading and writing. And now the topic is AIDS.

This is a war. AIDS is killing our children, women, teenagers. When we first started talking about AIDS, this is what we wrote:

What troubles me about AIDS is why research hasn't come up with a cure for AIDS or something that might give people hope for living. I am troubled because of my own health reasons such as if it comes to me having to go into the hospital, I worry about getting blood transfusions. What's the reason for more of one race to have it than others?

Claudia

I'm very afraid and angry about this virus because there is not much we can do to help the victims. I know I will not go out and get AIDS. But what will happen if I find out that my lover has gotten it and gives it to me? This thought has troubled me for quite a long time.

Salina

AIDS has become a big problem in Philadelphia. I read a lot about AIDS I did not know. I think young people should be taught about AIDS in school. I do not know what I would do if my child got AIDS. I would like to know what many people would do if their partners got AIDS.

Mattie

Let's find out who do we call about this virus. And if there is a cure, will the government pay or let the people die?

Mildred

* * *

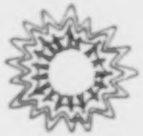
Your first thought: Could it happen to me? Then read about it. Because it's killing us, everybody. The more we learned, the more we wrote. And we thought it's time you learned too.

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS is a disease that breaks down the body's immune system so it can't fight infection.

HOW DO YOU GET AIDS?

If you are an active person who has sex with many partners, had a blood transfusion before 1985, or have been using I.V. needles, you should know that you are a high risk person to get AIDS. Read about AIDS, get information about it. Hopefully you will have the answers you need.



HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

You can have sex without being afraid to catch AIDS. Don't you deserve it?

Use a condom (known as rubbers) and a birth control jell with an ingredient called nonoxynol 9.
Try to know your sexual partners.
Do not use I.V. drugs. If you use drugs, don't share a needle.
Don't have sex with people who use I.V. drugs.

We as women need to try harder to get through to men on how important it is to protect their lovers and themselves by using condoms.

Stop AIDS! Don't be the next victims!

Claudia
Omelia
Salina

WHY ISN'T THERE A CURE?

In the beginning, it was mostly Gay white people who got the disease. It quickly spread to the Black community because of lack of education, health care, and money. The government wasn't concerned about Gay and Black people. They would prefer them to die rather than put money into science to find a cure. Because these particular people are unimportant to this country. When there is a cure, who will benefit most? Will Blacks and Gays be given equal medical care? Will they be able to afford it?

The government policy in America with AIDS is the hell with you. Why? Because Haitians, Blacks, Gays are discriminated against by the government and are being neglected. But if it was for the military, Reagan would give the world for it.

Claudia
Mattie
Mildred

SHOULD PEOPLE WITH AIDS BE ALLOWED TO GO TO WORK?

We think people with AIDS should be allowed to go to work because you can't get AIDS by being near someone or eating with them. In our research, we don't see where you can get AIDS by doing the following things: sharing typewriters, telephones, tools, paper, water fountains, desks, toilet seats, coffee pots or eating facilities.

People with AIDS probably have bills which have to be paid. They can't get help from the government, and someone is going to have to pay their bills. We know we can't get AIDS by shaking their hands. So we're not going to stand in the way of them making a living.

Joanne
Kenyatta
Peggie

HANDOUT

Critiquing Educational Materials

1. Look at the AIDS brochure that the women in Philadelphia created.

   Which of these things can you find in this brochure:

   ___ A list
   ___ A quote
   ___ Advice
   ___ Information
   ___ A story
   ___ A request for money
   ___ A question
   ___ A letter to someone
   ___ A poem
   ___ An address

   Who is this brochure for? How do you know?

   Who wrote it? How do you know?

   Why did they write it? How do you know?

   How did the writers make a personal connection to the reader?

   What part of the brochure was most memorable for you?

2. Bring to class other educational brochures you can find (the health clinic is an easy place to get some). Answer the same set of questions about them.

3. Make a list of what you want to remember if you make your own brochure some day.

4. The authors used their brochure to share information and raise issues that were missing from other educational materials. Think of a topic that is important to you. Gather some written information about your topic.

   What questions are answered by the materials?
   What questions are not answered?
   What issues are not addressed?

Saying What is True:

Women Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

by Judy Hofer

It was when a teacher spoke out about her background with poverty and abuse that the GED students at the Literacy Project in western Massachusetts began to speak about their own experiences with abuse. For many of these women, it was their first time voicing the words that had been held inside for so long. They decided to form a support group at their center to have a place to meet, drink coffee, tell jokes, share their stories, and support and listen to one another. They wanted to know how it is that violence can become so commonplace that it is normalized. Or, as one woman put it, "We want to make sense of what happened in our lives and figure out how so many women shared the same experience."

A core group of six women met almost every Wednesday morning for an entire year. For one woman in particular, these were the only friends she had and her only chance to socialize.

On several occasions the women went on full day retreats to piece together an understanding of some of their very difficult questions about domestic violence. They told their own stories about their first memories of being a girl, of what they did with their anger, of a time they took a stand as a woman. They analyzed the common threads in their experiences and probed to understand the root causes of such violence. They heard the pain; they saw each others' strength.

These women learned that, in fact, they are not alone. They realized that the question to ask is not "Why do women stay?" but "Why do men abuse?" They saw in each others' stories that they were not merely passively accepting the violence but were actively struggling to find a way out. As a way to lighten the intensity of their experiences and simply to celebrate who they are, the women made T-shirts with flowers that said, "Together We Bloom." They wore these with pride.

One of the more difficult experiences for this group was learning to express their feelings to one another when they disagreed. It was hard to push each other to say what is true. They had to make new groundrules to challenge one another to get out of denial. They had to tell one of the women that they were concerned that she is taking her anger out on her kids.

After their first year together, this group decided to make a video documenting their experiences with and understanding of violence. As one woman said, "We were talked out and it was time to take action." They wanted to inspire other women who are afraid to speak out to take a stand and hoped to influence those in positions of power to hold the abuser accountable for his actions. They decided to make a video, rather than write a book, because talking is what they have been doing and felt most comfortable with. In their words: "We want to make a video. We want to make it easier for women to have a voice and to have power and to be listened to, to change the way that it is now ... We also want to teach women: if we can't change systems of power, then at least we can give women the strength to speak up — the women at the bottom. Even though the systems may not change, we want the women to have the strength to speak up."

It took them close to a year to actually make the video. They received technical training from the local cable access TV channel on how to produce a video and create storyboards. Their back room was plastered with newsprint as the women tried to find the themes in their experiences.

They decided on three central ideas for the video: the normalization of violence against women; a critique of why women stay in abusive relationships; and reflections on their own learning and recommendations for others.

Some of the women were trained to be women's advocates by a university-based women's organization doing outreach in their town. These women brought back to the group statistics and models for understanding domestic violence. With their experiences, analysis, and research, they slowly created the body for the video.

Their efforts culminated in a wonderful day at the TV station in which the women powerfully recounted their stories and shared their understanding. There was something magical about that day – the energy felt larger than life. They think it had to do with a number of things: the power of having the cameras and crew surrounding them as their witnesses; the power of speaking out to an audience when to date they had only done so to themselves; the power of *doing*, of sharing with the intention of making a difference for others; and the pride they felt in having accomplished such a monumental task. Little did they realize that they then had to spend countless hours editing and trying to agree on what they wanted to cut or leave in for their final product. In the beginning, they tended to agree with each other, but by the end they had developed their inner voice and had strong opinions about editing. It was not easy to come to consensus and learn to compromise.

As the women reflected, "When you're in the tunnel and alone, you don't see the light. But when you have the support of others, the light is there. It's together that we are strong, and it's together that we can make a difference. Together we bloom."

Judy Hofer has worked in adult education for several years as an instructor, program coordinator, researcher, and staff developer.

This article is a composite of a report to the National Institute for Literacy and an article from *Bright Ideas*, Spring 1999, Vol. 8, No 4.

Together We Bloom: Women Speaking Out against Domestic Violence

Because the video is emotionally difficult and uses strong language, the women created an accompanying guide for teachers to read before viewing and showing the video. Both the video *Together We Bloom: Women Speaking Out Against Domestic Violence* and Video Guide can be ordered for $29.95 (plus shipping and handling).

In Massachusetts from:
The Literacy Project, Inc.
277 Main Street, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 1461
Greenfield, MA 01302-3934
(413) 774-3934

Outside Massachusetts from:
New Readers Press
U.S. Publishing Division of Laubach
P.O. Box 888
Syracuse, NY 13210-0888
(800) 448-8878

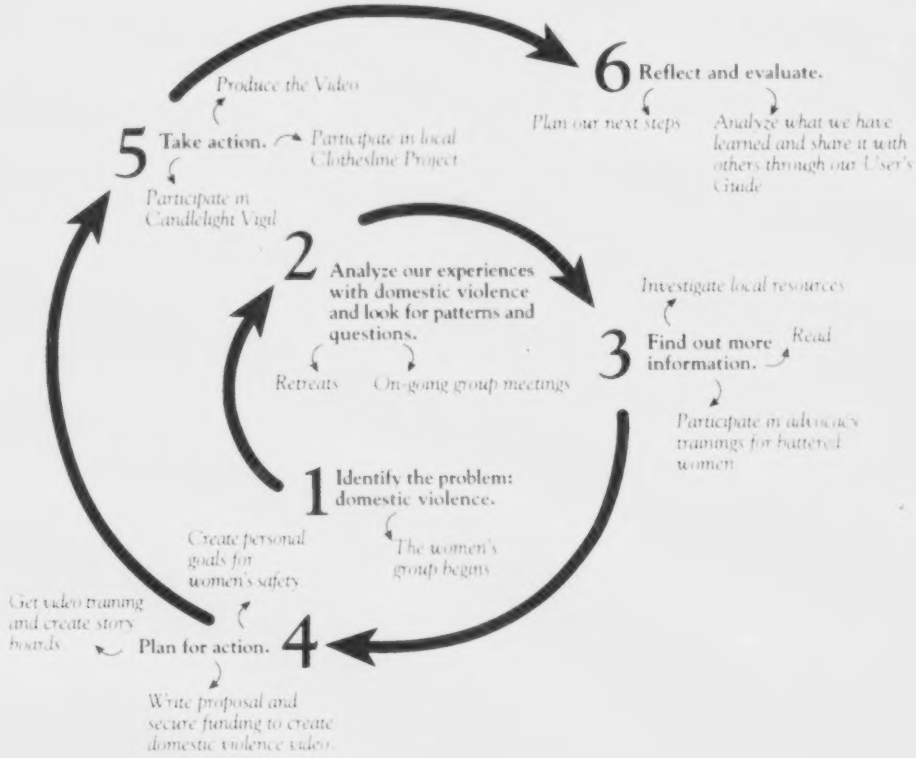
One dollar from the sale of each guide and video will go to a fund for women at The Literacy Project to support their educational goals.

Note: The materials developed by The Literacy Project are very useful in facilitating discussions about and plans for action around domestic violence issues, but are not necessarily to be used to *initiate* such discussions. To learn more about utilizing materials that touch on difficult subjects, please see Making Connections: Literacy and EAL from a Feminist Perspective (Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 1996).

PREP AND PRACTICE

Participatory Action Spiral

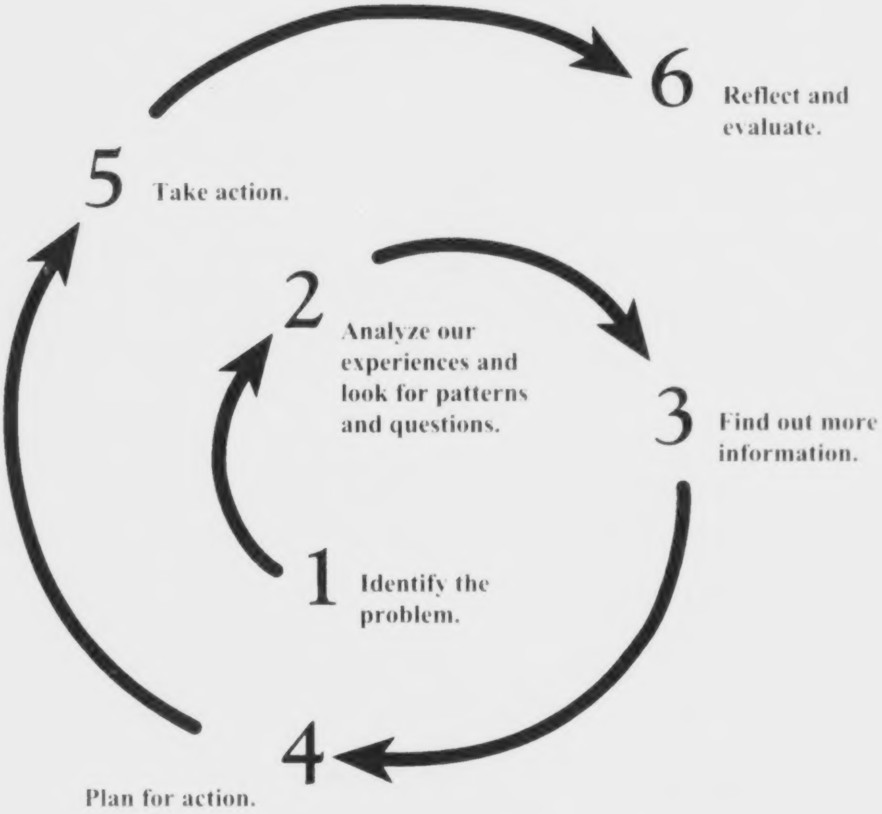
Although it may seem that the domestic violence video project moved along in a neat, step-by-step process, it did not. They repeatedly cycled through a series of six reflection and action steps that moved the group forward. When necessary, they shifted back and forth among the steps. For example, after getting funding to produce the video (part of the plan for action in step 4), they went back to steps 2 and 3 in order to understand domestic violence better. They also moved ahead to step 6 to reflect on their process and evaluate what was and was not working. The illustration below shows the connections between some of the activities and the group's process.


6 Reflect and evaluate.
Plan our next steps
Analyze what we have learned and share it with others through our User's Guide
Produce the Video
5 Take action.
Participate in local Clothesline Project
Participate in Candlelight Vigil
2 Analyze our experiences with domestic violence and look for patterns and questions.
Retreats
On-going group meetings
Investigate local resources
3 Find out more information.
Read
Participate in advocacy trainings for battered women
1 Identify the problem: domestic violence.
The women's group begins
Create personal goals for women's safety
Get video training and create story boards
4 Plan for action.
Write proposal and secure funding to create domestic violence video.

Graphic reprinted with permission from the guide to *Together We Bloom: Women Speaking Out Against Domestic Violence*, The Literacy Project, Greenfield, MA, 1998.

PREP AND PRACTICE

You might find it helpful to use a similar chart to guide your own project.


6 Reflect and evaluate.
5 Take action.
2 Analyze our experiences and look for patterns and questions.
3 Find out more information.
1 Identify the problem.
4 Plan for action.

HANDOUT

Working in Groups

What Helps You Feel Comfortable in a Group?

Consider various groups you have been involved in as you answer these questions:

- What were some of the positive things which you got from being part of a group?
- What were some of the drawbacks?
- What type of role did you play in the groups? Were you a leader, a follower, an organizer, a doer, a person who was quiet but dependable? Or were you not really there at all?
- Have your roles changed over the years?
- Which roles did you enjoy playing? Hate playing?

Here are a few common ways used to help people feel at ease in groups.

Ground Rules

Ground rules are agreements group members make about how they will behave in the group so that the meetings will run smoothly. There are many possibilities for ground rules. It is important that all members of the group agree to them. In new groups, it is a good idea to have the members themselves come up with the ground rules. Here are some common ground rules to get you started:

- Respect differences of opinion; no put downs.
- Take turns talking, one person at a time. Everyone should have a chance to speak.
- Start and end meetings on time.

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

Group Dynamics Beyond Ground Rules

Ground rules can help groups run meetings smoothly. But often they are not enough to ensure that everyone is respected and feels ownership over the group and its work. The more the group is able to share power – for example by rotating facilitation – the more ownership its members will feel. When people feel ownership over something they care more about the results. Here are some questions to guide your group's thinking and planning.

- What can the group do to allow each member's strengths to benefit the group?
- How do we show respect in this group?
- How do we give power to everyone in the group?
- How can we make this a safe group and keep it safe?
- How can we keep someone from taking too much power in this group?

Adapted with permission from *Running Meetings and Facilitating Groups*, a manual published by Massachusetts Northeast System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) and *Interacting with Others: An Affective Skills Curriculum* by Patti McLaughlin, published by Adult Basic and Literacy Educators (ABLE) Network, Seattle, WA.

HANDOUT

How Do I Work Across Differences?

1. Draw a big circle on a sheet of paper. Label it *My Family*. Inside it write everything you can remember about the differences among members of your family. For example, do your parents, siblings, spouse, children, or grandparents have different tastes in music, food, fashion, hobbies, etc.? How are their personalities different – are they serious or carefree, are they good talkers or good listeners? Do they have different political or religious beliefs and values?

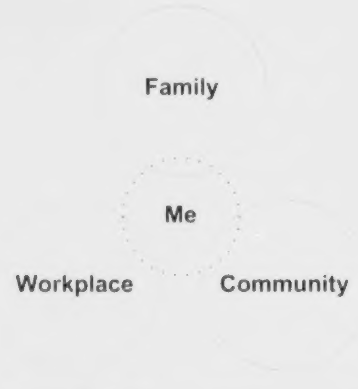
2. Draw another big circle on another sheet of paper. Label it *My Community*. Inside it write about the differences among people in your neighborhood. For example, do people speak different languages or come from different countries? Are your neighbors new to the area or have they lived there for many years? Are there differences in age, religion, class, occupations, etc.?

3. You may want to repeat this exercise with a circle labeled *My Workplace*.

4. Can you think of a time when you had to work across differences with people in your own family, your neighborhood, or your workplace? Write about this event and what you learned from it?

5. Draw a picture of yourself and beside it make a list of the qualities you have that help you to "work across differences."

6. Share your drawings and writings with the class. Talk about the differences among you. What helps you work together as a class?



Women Create Knowledge:

Participatory Action Research and Breast Cancer

Based on writings from "Who Holds the Mirror? The Mural, Oral Histories and Pedagogy of the Breast Cancer Oral History Action Project" by Beth Sauerhaft and Marty Williams

Low-income, low-literacy women, and disproportionately women of color, have a higher mortality rate and die more quickly once diagnosed with breast cancer than more affluent white women. Yet these women, whose lives are most at stake, are rarely included in decisions about policy regarding cancer research, treatment, and education. Women Take Care, Take Action, a women's health, critical literacy and social justice leadership organization in the San Francisco Bay area responded to that problem with the Breast Cancer Oral History Action Project (BCOHAP). Rooted in popular education, the BCOHAP taught low-income women to be leaders in community research and education about breast cancer and environmental justice. Specifically, it used a participatory action research (PAR) model, where participants become the subjects (rather than the objects) of research and use what they learn as the basis for social action.

In this project, BCOHAP collaborated with a local literacy program to train low-income, limited-literacy, and limited-English speaking women to gather the multilingual oral histories of medically underserved women with breast cancer. A group of five women – Latina, Chinese, and Portuguese-American – enrolled in the class. They began their inquiry by sharing their own understandings of breast cancer. None of the women had been diagnosed with breast cancer, but each knew someone who had. None of them had ever spoken aloud about breast cancer. As Beth Sauerhaft, the teacher of the class, reflected after the first session:

On this day they spoke stories of a man who left his wife after she was diagnosed with breast cancer, of mammogram reports they couldn't understand, of growing up as girls who were not supposed to talk about their bodies, about pain and lumps in their breasts, fear of breast cancer, about what cancer means in their native countries, about how hard it is to talk to doctors without "good English," about family members who died of cancer, about wanting to teach and tell their daughters, mothers, sisters, friends, about how "hushed" cancer is.

The group met for 16 weeks, exploring ways to talk about their bodies and cancer, learning medical terminology, hearing from breast cancer survivors, health education activists, oncology nurses, and social workers. They visited the Women's Cancer Resource Center in Berkeley, California, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing information and support services for women with cancer. They learned that support is different for each cancer patient. Some find support in a book, others by attending events or by meeting in groups with other cancer survivors. One key word they learned was "peer," the idea that women could come together with shared experiences to help each other. One participant, Maria Nakata, said about the class, *Before this class I used to be a 'Yes' person. Now I know how important it is for my health and my life to say 'No' — to ask lots of questions and to get second opinions. I tell my daughter — she is 15 — to speak up and ask questions. I'm a very different person now. I like myself better.*

The women also learned about chemicals in the environment and the probable connections between chemical pollution and cancer. They conducted surveys of the toxic chemicals in their own homes with an inventory of household cleaning products.

The women questioned and reflected in writing about what they were learning. And they took it home with them to daughters, husbands, sisters, and friends.

After the training, the women interviewed breast cancer survivors in their home languages about their experiences. They then worked with a community muralist to design a traveling mural to convey the broad range of issues which emerged during their training and oral history research. These issues include: environmental health and justice, cultural understandings of illness, death and dying, traditional and non-traditional healing, peer and family support, sexual and personal identity, body image and self-esteem, the politics of health care and research. The mural depicts women taking control of their lives and encouraging others to do the same. The faces in the mural portray people involved in the project — the action researchers, breast cancer survivors, health educators, activists, women community leaders. As it travels to literacy programs, health centers, conferences, social justice organizations, and cultural centers, the mural is a powerful catalyst for discussion of the social, political, and economic aspects of breast cancer.

The project was a significant learning experience for everyone involved. It drew upon participants' multiple literacies to analyze the world and investigate their own experiences; it challenged the women to be critical of health care institutions, and to negotiate health care relationships that satisfy their needs; and it gave people an experience of speaking out for the health of their communities at numerous events where the mural was displayed. Darlene Garcia, a participant, talks about what she learned:

There is a lot of money involved in not saying or doing much about breast cancer. That is why it is so important for our breast cancer research to help others from what we are learning. I think that if people can get a hold of the book we are going to put together we may help someone think twice about cancer and not be so hard on themselves and put the blame on the people who support products that harm us. What makes me most sad is that people do harmful things for money and don't care who gets hurt.

Since the completion of this project, Women Take Care, Take Action has launched a new project called Latinas Take Care, Take Action, which links breast cancer, environmental justice, and domestic violence. For more information about Women Take Care, Take Action's leadership projects, or to find out how to bring the mural to your organization, contact Beth Sauerhaft at (510) 558-3441 or at Women Take Care, Take Action, PMB 252, 1442-A Walnut, Berkeley, CA 94709. To order the accompanying mural guide, *Who Holds the Mirror? Breast Cancer, Women's Lives and the Environment*, and color poster and postcard reproductions of the mural, contact Peppercorn Press at (336) 574-1634.

HANDOUT

Assessing Your Listening Ability

Use a (+) if you are excellent at that skill and could easily teach others how to improve that skill.
Use a (/) if you are average at using that skill. You do as well as most people you know.
Use a (-) if you feel you need improvement in using that skill.

I listen for the other person's feelings, not just to the words they say.

I paraphrase what other people say to me.

I don't interrupt.

I am open-minded to ideas, some of which I don't think I agree with.

I remember what people say.

I am willing to express my feelings.

I don't complete other people's sentences even when I think I know what they are going to say next.

I make eye contact.

I don't think of what I'm going to say next while the other person is talking.

I ask the person questions in order to get more information and show that I am interested in what s/he is saying.

Reprinted with permission from *Interacting with Others: An Affective Skills Curriculum* by Patti McLaughlin, ABLE Network, Seattle, WA.

HANDOUT

Listening Techniques

Good listeners show that they are interested in what the speaker is saying. Here are some techniques that good listeners use.

Listening Techniques	
Type/Purpose	Sample Responses
Acknowledgement: • To make clear that you are interested and listening. • To encourage the person to continue talking. • To show that you understand how the speaker feels.	"I see." "Good point." "I didn't know that." "I know what you mean." "I understand."
Clarification: • To make sure you understood. • To get more information. • To encourage the person to speak more slowly or clearly.	"Do you mean that . . . ?" "Could you say more about that?" "I'm not sure I understood that. Could you say it again?" "I think I hear these points: . . . Is that right?" "If I understand correctly, you're saying . . ."

1. Tell about a time when someone really listened to you.

2. Tell about a time when you were not listened to.

Project Hope Students Teach Others about Welfare Reform

by Lorna Rivera

Project Hope is a shelter for homeless women and their children located in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. Soon approaching its 50th anniversary, Project Hope provides shelter for families in crisis, housing advocacy, a Children's Center, an Adult Education Center and a food pantry for community residents. All of our programs share a common commitment to economic justice and leadership development.

In 1994, a group of formerly homeless women met to discuss strategies for challenging the negative stereotypes of welfare mothers in the media. Almost 80% of Project Hope's staff are former clients, and we knew from our experiences that the depictions of lazy welfare mothers were simply not true. After much discussion and strategizing about what to do, we decided to raise funds to make a video.

The resulting 20-minute documentary video, "Women of Strength: Four Stories From the Welfare Debate," highlights the injustices individual women are facing in this new era of "reform." The documentary addresses misconceptions that shaped the welfare debate, challenges stereotypes with facts, and humanizes the debate with stories of real people.

During the year that the video was being produced, the New England Leadership Conference of Religious Women invited Project Hope women for a discussion about the state's welfare reform policies. To prepare for that conference, and also to begin developing ideas for a video viewer's guide, the women studied and discussed the welfare system in all of their classes. In history class, they studied about the Great Depression and the New Deal. They read about the history of human services, related to changes in the U.S. economy, unemployment, homelessness, and welfare reform.

WELFARE TO TRAINING TO WORK
FIRST EDUCATION THEN JOBS!
SUPPORT JOB TRAINING BILL

Some of the materials they used included the PBS series, the "War on Poverty," and *The War on the Poor: A Defense Manual* by Albeda, Folbre, and the Center for Popular Economics.

In political science classes, they studied the electoral process, examined political cartoons, and created their own political cartoons.

They also studied the federal and state legislative processes, with a special focus on how a bill becomes a law. In particular, they studied a bill drafted by Greater Boston Legal Services called "Education and Job Training." The bill stipulated that enrollment in education or job training could substitute for the 20 hours of unpaid community service that is required by the new law.

They then organized a field trip to the Massachusetts State House on "Lobby Day" to demonstrate support for the bill. Students spoke to legislative aides and visited the Senate and House chambers. They felt they were making a difference in the political process. They later wrote letters to senators and representatives stating their concerns about cuts in welfare. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed the bill.

The women, however, wanted to continue their work. Their Leadership Conference presentations had been a great success, and they were looking forward to doing community education workshops with the newly completed video. With a small grant to support their work, they developed workshops that were informative, engaging, and very powerful.

The workshops typically began with an exercise about myths and facts regarding welfare, a short role-play about two sisters (one who is a welfare recipient and one who expresses stereotypical views about women on welfare), and a "Welfare I.Q. Test." These initial activities were interactive, and designed to help audiences reconsider their assumptions and beliefs about welfare and poverty. Then "Women of Strength" was shown, and the women told their own stories. Finally, there were guided group discussions (using the political cartoons) to get at the challenges and possiblities for change. Interns from Legal Services were present at most workshops to offer help and advice.

The workshops were a success at many levels. By conducting the workshops for religious congregations and college students, Project Hope's adult learners developed important skills, such as public speaking. Some adult learners expressed a desire to go to a community college and major in human services in order to continue working with people in their community. And their efforts inspired several congregations to develop concrete strategies (such as establishing a scholarship fund for low-income mothers who want to attend college) to address issues of poverty.

For information on how to obtain a copy of *Women of Strength: Four Stories From the Welfare Debate*, please contact Lorna Rivera, Adult Education Coordinator at (617) 442-1880

HANDOUT

Helping Others Learn

What are some effective ways to help people learn about an issue? How can you make a workshop interesting to the audience? The women of Project Hope had to think about these questions to prepare for their "Women of Strength" workshops. The following activity can help you think about your own workshop.

What are some workshops you've attended? Classes?

Think about a time it was difficult to learn because the class or workshop was boring. What made it boring?

Think about a time it was easy to learn because the class or workshop was interesting. What made it interesting?

What do you think are some things the women of Project Hope did to make their workshop interesting?

Here are some things they did:
- They told people why the issue was important to them.
- They told about their own experiences with welfare.
- They invited people to ask questions.
- They asked people what they already knew about the issue.
- They showed their video.
- They used roleplays and cartoons to get everyone involved in discussions.
- They gave information that people needed.
- They all talked about what else people could do.

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

Helping Others Learn

Pick an issue that is important to you. Imagine that you are trying to help others learn about this issue. Use these questions to help you prepare a short workshop for them.

- Why is this issue important to you?
- How can you find out what the group wants to know?
- How can you find out what the group thinks about the issue?
- What information would you like people to know?
- How will you help people think about the information and the issue?
- If you were a workshop participant, what would make the workshop interesting for you?

PREP AND PRACTICE

Whose Point of View?

by Lenore Balliro

To become and stay informed, one must be able to find, interpret, and analyze diverse sources of information. Getting students to analyze diverse sources of information is often challenging because it involves the ability to see multiple points of view while exploring difficult issues. I tried the following two approaches with a group of basic writers to help them view an issue from multiple perspectives.

Writing Personal Narratives

At the beginning of the semester, I always start students off writing personal narratives because they can be experts about the subject matter — their own lives. This assignment directs students to write about an event in their lives that made them extremely excited, overjoyed, frightened, or angry. I want the students to zoom in on one particular event and to recreate the event with enough details so the reader can feel the powerful responses of the writer. After the first draft, students read aloud to each other (voluntarily) to get feedback which they can use for their revisions.

We then talk about issues that are included in each person's narrative. This helps students to situate their own personal experiences within a broader social and political context and to understand the often difficult concept of what an "issue" means. So, for example, one African-American student's story about a taxi driver who refused to take him as a passenger because of where he lived, suggests issues of racism and discrimination — issues that a whole community faces, not just one man or woman.

The next step involves asking students to identify and list all the characters in their narrative, then to select one of those characters and to rewrite the piece from the point of view of that character. For example, a woman who wrote about the time her house was broken into might write the story from the point of view of the robber, the policeman, the neighbor across the street, or the children in the next room. The African-American student might write from the point of view of the taxi driver, or the person on the curb who witnessed the event. Rewriting the narrative from another perspective essentially places the writer into the "moccasins" of another character and can evoke a deeper understanding of the incident, and a more complex investigation of the forces at play when certain events occur. If nothing more, it clarifies what "point of view" means.

Contrasting Readings on the Same Subject

Presenting students with articles about the same topic written by authors of widely divergent perspectives is another way to help students analyze different points of view. The 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of North America provided many adult education teachers the opportunity to present the same

PREP AND PRACTICE

information from very different perspectives. Teachers provided students with excerpts from traditional American history books about Christopher Columbus, versions that extoll Columbus as a hero and ignore his plundering and killing of indigenous people. They then contrasted this mainstream point of view with materials that told the story of Columbus and his men in a very different light – through the eyes of his victims, the Taino Indians, whose lives were devastated as a result of the European "invasion."

These different perspectives of exactly the same story illustrated for students how the story changes depending on who tells it. A goal for many teachers was to encourage students to continually assess the bias of a writer in order to analyze information. Contrasting points of view encouraged a more critical reflection of this incident in American history.

Teachers can take this approach in a variety of content areas: different magazines or newspapers, for example, will present the same story with a different spin on it. As with the Columbus example, events in history will be presented differently depending on who is telling the story. Think of the possibilities when looking at the civil rights movement in this country, for example. One citizenship teacher recently discussed how citizen education books often present Rosa Parks as a troublemaker who wouldn't move her seat on the bus, without offering any explanation of the context for that momentous event!

One valuable resource for looking at history from different perspectives is Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. Though the reading level is too difficult for most ABE or ESOL students, teachers themselves might find startling examples of different ways to analyze American history.

Lenore Balliro has worked in adult education for fifteen years as a teacher, program director, curriculum and staff developer. She is currently the editor of *Bright Ideas*, a statewide adult education newsletter in Massachusetts.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Framing the Issues

Framing an issue means interpreting it for an audience to help them make sense of it, or making a story out of it so that people can relate it to their lives. Frames work by relating an issue to people's existing beliefs, assumptions, and images about the world. A cartoon showing a politician with an outstretched hand and a rich person dropping money into it draws on themes about money buying political power. The people who are able to frame issues for the media have a lot of power. They have the power to tell others what the issues are, what they mean, and who the good guys and the bad guys are.

Small Group Activity

Each small group will read one of the two stories. Use the following questions to discuss your story. Choose a reporter from your group.

1. What is the key issue in this article?
2. Most stories identify "good guys" and "bad guys." The "bad guys" cause problems and the "good guys" fix the problems. Who are the "bad guys" in this story?
3. What are the key themes in the story? Pick out words, phrases, images and stereotypes that are part of the themes.
4. Who do you think the author is trying to talk to? What makes you think this?

Whole Group Discussion

In the larger group, tell each other about the discussions you had in your small groups. Then talk about these two questions:

1. Both of these stories have "true" information in them. So why do you think they are so different?
2. When you read an article, what do you need to think about besides the truthfulness of the information?

Follow-up

Find your own example of two articles that describe an issue with different frames. How do you think the frames will affect the readers' opinions?

Examples of Different Frames

Framing often involves stereotypes by using an extreme case and presenting it as if it were typical. Here are two different ways that an extreme case can be framed.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Version 1: Family of Abuse Suspect Has Dozens on Public Aid
At today's news briefing about welfare reform, Welfare Commissioner Joseph Gallant referred to the case of Clarabel Ventura as a prime example of what's wrong with the current system. Ventura, a single mother of six and long-time welfare recipient, has been accused of scalding her four-year-old son and leaving his burns untreated for weeks. Ventura has a history of drug addiction. Her children have been removed multiple times for abuse and neglect. Gallant said the Ventura family is indicative of the generational dependency and illegitimacy fostered by the current system. Clarabel's mother raised 17 children on welfare, 14 of whom are now raising children on welfare. At the age of 27, Ventura has six children by four different fathers. Gallant called for stricter measures such as time limits, cut-offs for women who have more children while on welfare, and fingerprinting of all public assistance recipients.

Version 2: Activists Accuse Commissioner of Stereotyping Welfare Moms
At today's press briefing on welfare reform, the Governor's Welfare Commissioner Joseph Gallant referred to Clarabel Ventura as "the textbook case for welfare reform." Ventura, a single mother of six who receives welfare benefits, has been accused of scalding her four-year-old son and leaving his burns untreated for weeks. When pressed by reporters, Gallant acknowledged that Ventura's case is not typical. However, Gallant has distributed stories about the Ventura case to State lawmakers, along with a "Dear Colleague" letter urging them to support reforms such as time limits and fingerprinting of all AFDC and food stamp recipients. A group of about 20 protested outside the state house during Gallant's briefing. Welfare activist Sue Wilson criticized Gallant, saying he keeps referring to the tragic case of Clarabel Ventura "as if she represented all mothers on welfare." Wilson added "Gallant knows that AFDC moms have, on average, two children." Protesters held placards that called for the state to "Fix the economy, not poor moms."

Stories reprinted with permission from Charlotte Ryan, "Battered in the Media: Mainstream News Coverage of Welfare Reform," *Radical America*, July 1996. Activities adapted with permission from *Grassroots Policy Project: Introduction to Worldview*, Grassroots Policy Project, Washington, DC, (202) 387-2933

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities

by Deborah L. Johnson

Finding Common Ground

I teach life skills classes for Adult Basic Education, pre-GED, and GED students. The class I write about here was made up of immigrants and native-born Americans from many backgrounds. Their ages ranged from 16 to 78.

Establishing common ground was a project in itself. Our first step was to discuss and write about what is a community. We talked about the issues that affect the students' communities. At first, the students focused on their differences, but as they talked they started to realize that they all faced many of the same issues. Most students felt that they couldn't change their communities. They blamed other people, the "system," and their lack of power.

After much discussion, the students decided they did want to try to make a difference in their communities. We took turns stating problems we thought were affecting the communities, and why they were happening. The list of issues included teen pregnancy, drugs, gang violence, poor education, homelessness, lack of respect for one another, racism, child abuse, domestic violence, and police brutality. We narrowed down the list to teen pregnancy, drugs and gang violence, lack of respect for one another, and homelessness. Later I came to realize that these issues were a painful reality for some of the folks in the room.

The Survey

The class decided to put together a survey to get input from the community on these topics. They broke into groups by topic. We appointed one facilitator per group. The groups came up with five questions for their topic. Some of the questions were: What is an ideal community? Why do you think people are homeless? What ways is respect demonstrated in the community? What ways is it not? How is your community affected by drugs?

The students went into different neighborhoods to conduct the survey. They interviewed people at schools, churches, businesses, talking to a total of about 85 people. Once we had the responses, we began to discuss some of the concerns and comments that were made by folks in the community. The class compared the answers from neighborhood to neighborhood. We worked on separating facts from opinions and developing recommendations for solving problems in the community.

We had planned originally to do only class presentations and educate each other, but as we talked we came to the conclusion that we needed to give the information out to others in the community. The students decided that they would like to put together a forum for the junior high school students. They chose junior high because they felt that this is when peer pressure kicks in. They believed that the younger students needed to know that there were better opportunities in life.

Working On Ourselves

I thought the forum was an excellent idea, but, thinking of some of the heated discussions we had had, I also felt the need to help my students reflect on their own experiences before taking the project any further. I decided to do an exercise called "memory lane" with the students. I asked the students to visualize way back to being in the womb, and then think through their lives up to the present. I asked them to think of the people in their lives, both those who had been supportive and those who had not. The students were really emotional. We identified a common bond: we all have struggles and our pain is not unique. I even tapped into some things that were not resolved for me.

After the memory lane activity, the project seemed to be heading in the right direction. The group dynamics improved. The students demanded that they respect each other's right to a difference of opinion. They insisted that nobody use inappropriate language. They asked each other to be on time; those who were absent or late had to make sure to get the information they needed so the project would not be affected.

Unfortunately, just as the project started to get off the ground, the students started to enjoy the spring weather more than the classes. Even the most motivated students' interest began to drop off. We were becoming discouraged because we felt that we could not accomplish what we had set out to do. I decided that the important thing was for me to keep those students who were still involved working on the forum. Those who were not going to participate became the audience, so that those who were going to present could get a feel for what it would be like.

The Forum

One afternoon the students and I had a class discussion on the issues we had chosen to work on. We were still deciding how we would present them to the junior high school students. One student said she would like to develop a panel. Panel members would speak on a personal note about the topics teen pregnancy, drugs and gang violence, respect, and homelessness. Four students were selected to sit on the panel.

Finally, the day arrived for the forum which was held at Lewis Fox Middle School in Hartford, Connecticut. The panelists were both nervous and excited. We chose to hold the forum in the suspension room where children are detained for violation of school rules or disrespectful behavior. We wanted to reach the children who were making poor choices for themselves and help them turn their obstacles into opportunities. A total of 17 students attended the forum, mainly young men.

After I introduced the panel, Taliea spoke about the disadvantages of becoming pregnant at a young age. Seven months pregnant with her first child, she spoke about making wrong decisions in her life and her misconceptions about how much fun it would be having a baby. She also told the students about sexually transmitted diseases, and the risks she took with her life by having sex without using a condom. The junior high school students seemed to be really interested in what this former student of Lewis Fox had to say. In the discussion that followed, the students talked about peer pressure and about moving too fast into commitments for which they were not ready.

The next speaker began by discussing the community he lives in and the advantages and disadvantages to growing up in the "hood." I admired the way he conducted his conversation with the students. In the beginning, he spoke in slang, and as he talked about how he grew and changed, so did his language. Students caught on to this change without him pointing it out to them.

John (not his real name) discussed how he had started out as a productive member of society and then became the stereotypical homeless bum and drug addict. He lost everything and ended up bouncing from shelter to shelter, living anywhere he could lay his head. He urged the students to stay in school, to believe in themselves, and to never let anyone tell them that they cannot accomplish their goals in life. The students commended him on how he had turned his life around.

Reflections

The junior high students seemed to enjoy the forum. They had lots of questions and comments. They shared their feelings about peer pressure. They expressed their gratitude to the panelists. Their teachers asked if we would do it again.

Working on this project was a rewarding

experience for us as a class. Although it was time consuming, the more we worked on the forum, the more we learned. The students practiced writing, research, planning, public speaking, and advocacy skills. They learned about organizing forums. Through that process, they bonded and developed leadership skills. They felt like they can and did make a difference in the lives of the young people, as well as their own. And they learned the vital role they play in their communities.

Deborah L. Johnson has been at the Urban League of Greater Hartford in Hartford, Connecticut, for 3 years as a life skills teacher and an Adult Center for Education (ACE) counselor.

Adapted with permission from *Focus on Basics*, December 1998, Vol. 2, Issue D, a quarterly publication of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), funded by the Educational Research and Development Centers Program, Award Number R309B60002. For more information on Focus on Basics contact Barbara Garner, World Education/NCSALL, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210-1211; email FOB@WorldEd.org.

HANDOUT

Writing Survey Questions

There are two basic kinds of survey questions.

An **open question** is one in which the person can give any answer. An example of an open question is: "What do you think would make your neighborhood a better place to live?" and the person may give you a one word answer or they may talk for 5 or 10 minutes.

A **closed question** is one in which the person may only answer in a word, a number, or by choosing one answer from a list. An example of a closed question is: "Which problem are you most concerned about? A) Rent control B) Health care costs C) Crime."

What are the advantages of each kind of question?

Types of Closed Questions:

Read about the different kinds of closed questions and then make up your own.

1. **Short answer:** These are questions in which people answer the question with a word or number.
   Examples: What is your native language? (one word)
   How many children do you have? (number)
   Do you own your house? (yes/no)

   Your example: ____________________

2. **Scale:** In these questions, people select their answer from a scale. You may use a number scale, or a word scale.
   Examples: How easy is it for you to attend community meetings?
   Very easy Easy So-so Difficult Impossible
   Or: 1 2 3 4 5 (1 is very easy and 5 is impossible)

   Your example: ____________________

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

3. **Multiple choice:** In these questions, people choose their answer from a list you give them. You can ask them to choose just one answer, or all that apply. They can also add a new answer to the list.

Example: Where do you get your information about the news?

a) The newspaper
b) The television
c) Friends
d) Other ____________________

Your example:

a)

b)

c)

d)

Adapted with permission from the Leadership to Improve Neighborhood Communication and Services (LINCS) curriculum Allston-Brighton Healthy Boston Coalition, 1996

HANDOUT

Analyzing Survey Data

"Data" is the information we collect from surveys, interviews, or other kinds of research tools. See "First Lay the Groundwork" (p. 17) and "Choosing an Issue to Work On" (p. 10) to learn how to analyze data from open questions.

We use data from closed questions to measure and compare things. For example, look at the answers of six people who took a housing survey:

	Person					
Question	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Do you own or rent?	Own	Rent	Rent	Rent	Own	Rent
If you rent, how much is your rent?	----	$450	$900	$800	----	$850
Has your rent gone up in the last year?	----	No	No	Yes	----	Yes

What can we find out from these answers?

1. A simple **count** of the answers.

Example: How many people rent? 4
How many people pay $600 or more in rent? 3

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

2. A **percentage**. To calculate a percentage, divide the number of answers in a category by the total number of respondents. Then multiply by 100 (or just remove the decimal point).

Example: What percent of all respondents are owners?
2 (owners) ÷ 6 (respondents) = .33 x 100 = 33% are owners

What percent of renters had rent increases last year?
2 (with increases) ÷ 4 (renters) = .50 x 100 = 50% of renters had an increase

3. An **average (mean)**. You can only find an average if your answers are numbers. To calculate the average, add up all the responses and then divide by the total number of respondents.

Example: What is the average rent paid?
$450 + $900 + $800 + $850 = $3000 (total rent)
$3000 (total rent) ÷ 4 (renters) = $750 is the average rent

Use the information in the chart to answer these questions:

1. How many people pay **less than** the average rent?

2. What percent of renters pay **more than** the average rent?

3. Add your own question for others in the group to answer.

Section 5

Organizing for Change

Section Introduction

Don't Take "No" for an Answer: A Poor Neighborhood Organizes

Transportation on the Move!

Light in Montana: How One Town Said No to Hate

Section 5: Introduction

This section includes examples of individuals and groups mobilizing others to right an injustice or demand equitable response to their needs. Organizing is an ambitious form of civic participation because it entails seeing a project through until results are achieved. This can be particularly difficult for adult education programs because it requires a long-term commitment of resources – time, program support, etc. A benefit, though, is that it offers authentic opportunities for adult students to interact with the public world of organizations, communities and systems to get things done, and then to reflect on the results of their efforts. Along the way, they are probably engaged in all the other forms of civic participation – building community, demanding accountability, and educating others. They discover community resources and build relationships with allies. And they direct their own purposeful learning – that is, they evaluate a situation and then decide which skills need to be honed in order to get something done.

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you review this section:

1. Assuming student interest in organizing, what other program support might be needed?
2. Why might a group begin an organizing project that will probably continue beyond the length of a class?
3. What are some strengths and limitations of organizing as a way to improve community?

The examples in this section draw primarily upon the following skills and activities.

EFF Common Activities

- ✓ Gather, Analyze, and Use Information
- ✓ Manage Resources
- ✓ Work Within the Big Picture
- ✓ Work Together
- ✓ Provide Leadership
- ✓ Guide and Support Others
- ✓ Seek Guidance and Support from Others
- ✓ Develop and Express Sense of Self
- ✓ Respect Others and Value Diversity
- ✓ Exercise Rights and Responsibilities
- ✓ Create and Pursue Vision and Goals
- ✓ Use Technology & Other Tools to Accomplish Goals
- ✓ Keep Pace with Change

EFF Skills

Communication Skills
- ✓ Read with Understanding
- ✓ Convey Ideas in Writing
- ✓ Speak So Others Can Understand
- ✓ Listen Actively
- ✓ Observe Critically

Decision Making Skills
- ✓ Use Math to Solve Problems & Communicate
- ✓ Solve Problems and Make Decisions
- ✓ Plan

Interpersonal Skills
- ✓ Cooperate with Others
- ✓ Advocate and Influence
- ✓ Resolve Conflict and Negotiate
- ✓ Guide Others

Lifelong Learning Skills
- ✓ Take Responsibility for Learning
- ✓ Reflect and Evaluate
- ✓ Learn through Research
- ✓ Use Information & Communication Technology

Don't Take "No" for an Answer:

A Poor Neighborhood Organizes

by Brenda Bell and Elnora Yarborough

Several years ago, Elnora Yarborough saw a problem in her community and took action to solve it. She started alone, but before long she got the neighbors involved in her efforts to get a school bus to come through her community. Eventually she and her neighbors joined JONAH (Just Organized Neighborhoods Area Headquarters), an organization of low-income residents of seven rural west Tennessee counties. JONAH was started over 15 years ago to organize residents of Madison County, Tennessee to solve community problems. The organization has grown to include eleven chapters in seven counties. Members work on many different issues, including health care, transportation, and schools. When Elnora first become interested in JONAH, she was asked to arrange a meeting of area residents to talk about how people could work together to solve their problems. Ninety people showed up for the first meeting of the West Madison chapter. Elnora now serves as the JONAH representative to the board of the Southern Empowerment Project, an organization of nine grassroots community organizations in the southeast.

- I guess I'll start off saying that I learned how to stand on my two feet from a school event. We had five children. During the time when they all started school, we lived on a blacktopped road and the bus was coming through. And then we bought and built on a dirt road. This particular road had quite a few kids, walking from one end to the other out to the blacktop to catch the bus. So I decided that my husband and I would go and ask the superintendent if he could put a bus through there. This was a black community. He told me no, we didn't have enough kids (in the neighborhood). I asked how many does it take. I told him I had 40. He didn't believe me.

So my husband and I got a list of the kids, and I carried it back to the superintendent. Then he thought I had made up the names. I had to go back and get the addresses and their parents' names. I went door to door, walking, and asking the parents if they would go over there in a group. Some people were scared, they had never done this before, and they didn't want to do it. So I said, we've started and we're not going to stop. I got all the information and carried it back. I had to make seven trips. I had to convince him.

Finally we got a bus – it was still a dirt road. When it was dry, the bus would come through, but when it rained, it didn't. I would have to walk out to the blacktop with coats and boots to meet the bus after school. That's when JONAH came through, we went to fighting for a road, and we got a road.

I have learned to stand up and fight for anything in the community and anywhere. 'Cause all you've got to do is ask. And if they say no, don't take no for an answer. Because they're going to say no – but keep going back. You'll get something done when they know that you're a person that sticks.

Reprinted with permission from the Center for Literacy Studies from its report to the National Institute for Literacy, July 1996, *Equipped for the Future Initiative*

Asking the Right Questions:

The Right Question Project's Steps for Democratic Participation

In the fall of 1990, Nancy Rodriguez, a poor Latina mother of six living in the old Massachusetts mill town of Lawrence, began to discover for the first time a complex maze of decision-making processes that directly affect her.

It all began when, on the first day of school, she was left standing on the curb with her children, waiting for a school bus that never showed up. Nancy Rodriguez first asked, "Where is the school bus?" She then moved quickly to try to get an answer to "Why didn't it show up?" She soon found out that the school committee had eliminated the bus route just two weeks earlier.

She was not satisfied with this answer so she set out to identify who was responsible for this decision. It was clear to her that whoever made that decision had a very different set of priorities. And now she was left to figure out how, without a car and without any decent public transportation, she would get her six children to three different schools.

Over the next few months, on her way to finding out if she could hold anyone accountable for this decision, Nancy Rodriguez went from office to office, from school committee to city council and back to the school committee again. She frequently was told by elected officials: "Why are you coming now? Where were you when we made that decision?" She kept on going to subcommittee meetings, she talked to the media, she talked to representatives of the state department of education and, most of all, she talked to parents. She effectively mobilized other parents, temporarily. But she also realized that very few people in her community had any knowledge about how decisions were constantly being made that affect them. She had made connections and figured out a step-by-step strategy for taking action. At The Right Question Project we learned a lot from Nancy's experience.

We call her strategy **"Steps for Democratic Participation"**

These are the basic steps:

1. Nancy Rodriguez *became aware* of a decision-making process that affected her.

2. She started to pay *attention* to how decisions are made, who makes them and when they are made.

3. She began to *gather information* about how the decisions will be made, what factors will be considered, which criteria are used and who sets them.

4. She began to closely *monitor* the decision-making process, attending meetings and making decision-makers aware of her presence.

PREP AND PRACTICE

5. Based on all the previous steps, she took *action* in many ways, *advocating* strongly for her interests, *organizing* other parents, *lobbying* bureaucrats and elected officials. After all that was done, she led scores of unregistered parents to city hall to register to vote.

The five steps taken by Nancy Rodriguez demonstrate the importance of a process for taking effective democratic action. *The Steps for Democratic Participation* offer a step-by-step strategy for enabling people to participate effectively in the patchwork of decision-making processes we lump together as democracy.

Reprinted with permission from The Right Question Project, 2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314, Cambridge, MA 02140. (617) 492-1900.

HANDOUT

Applying the Right Question Process

What are some examples of decision-making processes going on right now that affect you but that you are not involved in?

A. List at least two decision-making processes.

B. Choose ONE decision-making process from your list.

C. What questions should you ask about this decision-making process? List your questions.

D. From your list, select what you consider to be the most important question and be ready to explain why you chose it.

E. What are some more questions you could ask about the most important question that will get you closer to an answer you need.

F. Report back to the large group.

Reprinted with permission from The Right Question Project, 2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314, Cambridge, MA 02140. (617) 492-1900

PREP AND PRACTICE

New Bedford Students Ask Questions about the Economy

by Andrea Mueller and Corinn Williams

At the Workers' Education Program (WEP) in New Bedford, we were very aware that a continued high unemployment rate and layoffs in the local economy have had a dramatic effect on the incomes and opportunities of families in our community. In an effort to incorporate community issues into the curriculum, we have asked students what issues they are concerned about. We work together with other community agencies to address these concerns. Over the past few years, students have overwhelmingly answered that the biggest problem was New Bedford's loss of manufacturing jobs, which is affecting their families, friends, and their neighborhoods.

We decided to design a workshop on questioning strategies developed by The Right Question Project. We built the workshop around students' concerns about the economy using open-ended questions to which we didn't necessarily have the answers. We opened the workshop with a questionnaire in English and Portuguese about students' perception of their economic well-being. Since there was a great range of English proficiency in the classes, it was important to give students the opportunity to speak in their own language. This allowed everyone to participate, and led to very lively discussions.

As a result of the workshop, students wrote letters to elected officials on all levels and invited a state representative to class to ask the questions which they had generated. This was also a good opportunity to engage in a discussion on how to reach decision-makers at different levels of government. Students seemed to be excited by the knowledge that their opinions could be heard.

The following workshop is an example of how students of any level of English can ask questions about complex issues and can take action on a key issue affecting their lives. Asking questions proved to be a useful tool to address economic issues in the community.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Why Is New Bedford Losing Manufacturing Jobs?

Goal: To develop active citizens by validating the opinions and concerns (in English and Portuguese) of economic actors in New Bedford.

Objectives:

- Students will practice asking questions and generate ideas about a public issue.
- Students will become aware of decisions that can cause job loss or job creation.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills about decision-making processes that have directly or indirectly affected them.

PREP AND PRACTICE

- Students will think about their role in the local economy.
- Students will develop a plan to give public input into the local economy.

Lesson Activities:

Introduction to topic

Tell students that we want to do a lesson on the local economy because they have told us over and over again that this is their greatest concern. Tell students that they shouldn't expect to have the answers to questions we pose. Relate this lesson to citizenship and democracy.

Warm-up/Getting into the issue

Have students fill out a questionnaire which looks at "How secure do you feel about your job?" Students fill out the survey and share their thoughts with their neighbor. Follow-up with a group discussion.

Brainstorm

Have students brainstorm the names of factories that have closed in New Bedford during the last ten years. In our classes, students generated the names of about fifteen factories.

Questioning

Organize students into small groups, and have them write their responses to the following questions in English and/or Portuguese on newsprint:

1. Have you ever asked yourself how the job market in New Bedford got to where it is now? Why did this happen?

   Examples of responses from our students:
   - Jobs went to foreign countries or down south where labor is cheaper.
   - NAFTA made companies move to Mexico.
   - The tax rate and the cost of doing business for companies in New Bedford is higher than the rate somewhere else.

2. If we knew then what we know now, what could we have asked decision-makers about the economy? Imagine that all the people who are responsible for the present economic situation are sitting in front of this class. What would you ask them?

   Examples of responses from our students:
   - Why is the tax rate for companies high in New Bedford?
   - Why doesn't New Bedford attract other industries or why has New Bedford not been successful in attracting other industries?

PREP AND PRACTICE

3. To whom should we ask questions about the New Bedford economy? Make a list of elected officials and others.

4. Go back to the list of questions, and next to each question write the name of the person you would want to ask that particular question. Example: Why are the water bills so high in New Bedford? Question is for mayor/city government.

Action Plan
How can we contribute to a public debate? Brainstorm ways of talking about the issue publicly. Have students create an action plan.

Examples of activities: Write letters to the editor, call radio talk shows, ask questions at candidates' debates.

Andrea Mueller was a coordinator and teacher at the Workers Education Program, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, MA. Corinn Williams is the Associate Director of the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern, MA.

Reprinted with permission from *The Change Agent*, Issue 3, September 1996.

Transportation on the Move!

by Pat Larson, Cindy Rodriguez, Caridad Santiago, Donna Swain, and Lisa Willard, with an overview by Cindy Rodriguez

Overview

In January 1997, a group of women got together for a meeting to talk about problems in the North Quabbin community in Massachusetts. We came to the conclusion that the most important problem in our area was that we have no transportation. We have one cab service between Orange and Athol, and the prices are outrageous. Sometimes there is an answering machine on when people call. Then that one cab is not available, and this can be very discouraging.

During the workshops we had in the winter, we discussed everything from why we need transportation to how to get it! We made a list and came up with different ideas. We started with the history of transportation – past, present and future. We found that if we were going to fight for something we believed in, we would have to know a lot about the subject.

So we went as far back in the history of transportation to trolleys and early buses, and the loss of any form of public transportation in the area during the last fifteen years. We learned a great deal about transportation and had fun doing it! We wrote letters and made phone calls. We set up meetings with regional transit officials, selectmen, politicians, representatives from different agencies, and other interested community members. We formed a North Quabbin Transportation Task Force after a community meeting in March. We also did a ten-minute video and aired it on our local cable access television station (A.O.T.V.) to make people aware of our problem. After the video, we had a live panel discussion, where people could call in with their comments and questions.

So far everything seems to be working. We are in the process of getting a van service, which will help out a great deal. As far as a public bus, we may not see it tomorrow, but we are being heard, and we are getting more and more people involved.

How Did Our Discussions Begin?

First we did a paper quilt about how we saw our family, our classroom, our community, and ourselves. We listed a lot of things on newsprint, where everybody put ideas of all the problems in the area. We tallied the ones people thought were the most important and found that transportation was the most important issue for us.

In the paper quilt, we each wrote out words that related to Self, Family, Classroom, and Community. Then as we put them on the newsprint we shared our thoughts with the group. This activity started to get us talking about some of our common concerns about our community as everyone put their "quilt squares" up for the group to see.

How Did We Do Research to Find Out More about the Issue Concerning the Need for Public Transportation?

We talked about questions that we could ask to get information about public transportation in our community. We listed both questions about the past and the present. Some of our ideas for questions to use for our research included:

Finding out about the history of transportation in this area:

- When did Orange have some form of public transportation? What kind of public transportation did this area have in the past?
- Why did it stop?
- Who is responsible?

Getting public transportation in the 1990s:

- What kind of public transportation would work in this area?
- Where will the money come from to support some form of public transportation now?
- How do we get support for this from people who have cars?

From these questions, we asked more questions and talked to more people. We found that we could get information by using the following resources:

- Making phone calls to people who knew the community and who could give us information and names of others to call.
- Talking with older people who remembered riding the local trolleys, buses, and trains.
- Visiting the local library and historical society.
- Looking in old newspapers at the library.
- Writing letters to elected officials and public transportation officials.

How Did We Educate Other People in the Community?

After several workshop meetings, we began to feel that we should talk with other people in the community about the need for some form of public transportation. Even before we started to take action and talk to other people about this issue, we started to list possible ways to educate other people in our community. Some ideas included:

- Circulate a petition in the community asking people to support getting some form of public transportation into the area.
- Put up flyers in local stores.
- Talk to other people we know who might be concerned about this issue.
- Write to legislators to get their support.
- Write letters to the editor of the local newspaper.

- Produce a skit or video show for the community access television station.
- Organize and hold a community meeting about this issue.

We did many activities together and let people in the community know that we were concerned about the lack of affordable public transportation. We wrote letters, circulated a petition, talked to people we knew and to government officials. After working together for three months, we held a community meeting about the need for public transportation.

Someone in the workshops suggested the idea of making a video. We read a short play together and tried some role playing, and then people started planning their own skit. This was new to all of us. But we all got excited about producing a community television show (AOTV- Channel 13) and stayed with it until our transportation skit and talk show was on community television.

Update on the Campaign for Affordable Public Transportation

When we started working on this issue, some of us did not think it was going to go anywhere. The only thing we were going to do was fight to get a public bus scheduled for Athol and Orange with a possible link to Greenfield. But now we have succeeded in getting a Volunteer Ride Share Project going.

Over the summer people from agencies and the community met each Wednesday over lunch to hammer out details concerning a pilot project to bring some form of community-based public transportation to the Athol-Orange area.

In the fall, we had a raffle and walk-a-thon to raise funds for the costs of insurance and upkeep for the van. We continued to work with the N.Q.T. Coop to coordinate a useful van service. Donna drove the van for many community groups while Lisa worked to keep track of paperwork and scheduling. Our next goal is to set up a bus service along Route 2 with stops in the Athol and Orange area, and maybe even use the old Athol train depot for a transportation center. At each step along with way, we're reminded of Margaret Mead's inspiring quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has!"

Pat Larson coordinates the Orange, MA site of The Literacy Project. Cindy Rodriguez, Caridad Santiago, Donna Swain, and Lisa Willard are community activists and were students in Pat's class.

Orange Area: 1930s-1990s

Population has not really grown since 1919 - about 19,000 people

The Great Depression

WW II
Women went to work in factories

Vietnam War

1990s - New Directions
More support
People work together more

Trolley service since 1894

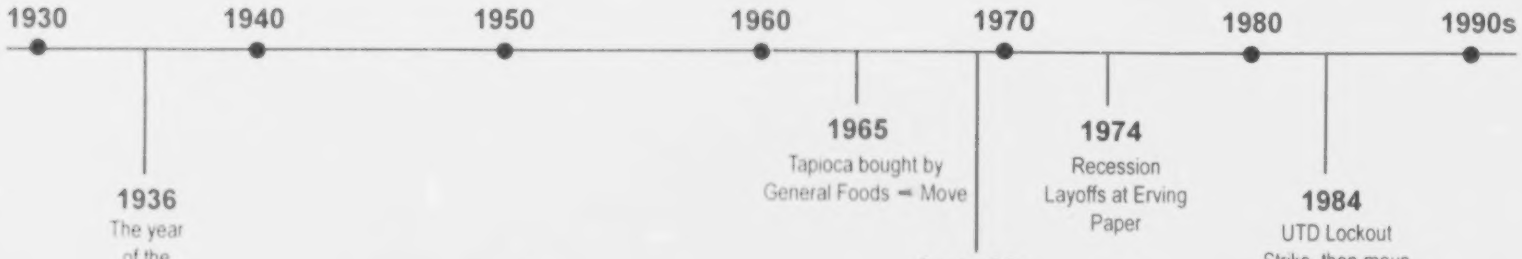
Bus service replaces trolleys
Railroad service to Orange

Interstate built, but highway doesn't pass by Orange

Railroads not maintained

People get cars and start to go to malls. Fewer people use buses. Services are reduced.

Less government money for public transportation in rural areas



1936
The year of the flood

1965
Tapioca bought by General Foods → Move

Late 60s
Japanese Co. buys New Home Sewing → Move

1974
Recession
Layoffs at Erving Paper

1984
UTD Lockout
Strike, then move
500 people lose jobs

Housing costs up
Farmers lose farms

More farming
Hand-me-downs worn
Animals raised for food
Gardens

Logging still in area

Good Times in Orange Area
Factories open - town full of stores, fruitstands, etc.
Economically pretty stable
Big fairs & parades

Harder times
Factory buy-outs/move overseas
Union breaking
More factories and stores start to close. Money becomes a problem.

Orange Revitalization: →
Community garden
Farmers market
"Celebrate the Harvest" Parade
New Coalition for public transportation

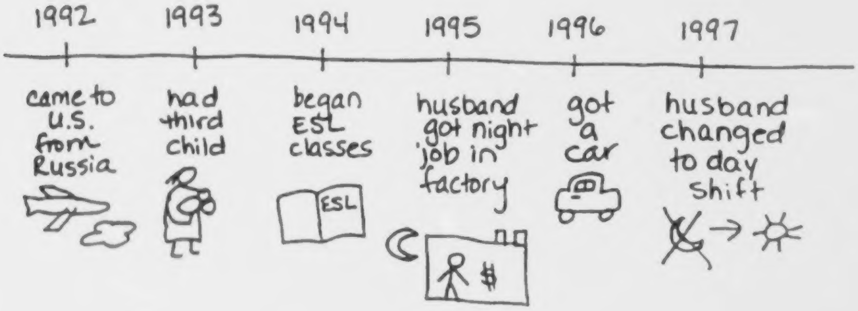
PREP AND PRACTICE

Timelines

Timelines are a great way to provide language practice about anything that can be sequenced. Students can draw a timeline of their life, their journey to this country, their typical daily activities, the sequence of their children's births, or their job history. This prepares them to discuss their personal history with an INS interviewer.

On other occasions, the timeline may contain historical information students will likely be asked about the United States. It can be broad, covering hundreds of years of time or it may be very specific. The degree of specificity may depend on the level of English fluency. For example, high level ESL students may be able to provide great detail with names and dates of important events in U.S. history. Beginners may provide the most basic information.

Here are some examples:


1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
came to U.S. from Russia
had third child
began ESL classes
ESL
husband got night job in factory
$
got a car
husband changed to day shift

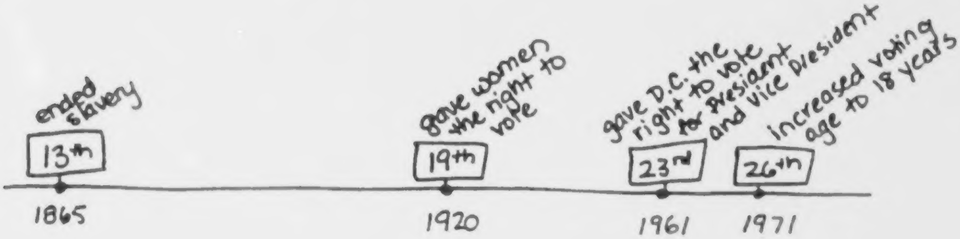

ended slavery
13th
1865
gave women the right to vote
19th
1920
gave D.C. the right to vote for President and Vice President
23rd
1961
increased voting age to 18 years
26th
1971

Illustration reprinted with permission from *Citizenship: A Guide to Good Teaching*, Tacoma Community House Training Project, P.O. Box 5107 Tacoma, Washington 98415, (253) 383-3951

PREP AND PRACTICE

Timeline Activities

by Pat Larson

What Did I Do?

During my last class session, I discovered that the students I was working with had minimal real awareness of the number of decisions and decision-makers that surround them in everyday life. I decided to try an exercise to make them think of the extent to which others are in a position to make decisions that can affect them. I designed a timeline that depicted different periods in life from birth to post 65. There were five periods in all (0-5 years), (6-15 years), (16-20 years), (21-64), and (65+). I divided the class into groups.

What Did My Students Do?

Each group listed all the people that had decision-making power over them during their selected period. They also had to list one or two examples of the kinds of decisions that could be made by each listed person. When each group had finished, we reviewed each list and the students had the opportunity to add to each other's list. They then selected one decision-maker and created a situation to learn the question formulation technique. The situation focused on a worker who had just gotten notice that he had been laid off. We went through the beginnings of the questioning process and got as far as the discussion about close and open-ended questions. During this phase, we frequently discussed the role of the questioning in the decision-making process.

Activities

Timelines are terrific tools for pulling together people's individual knowledge, framing inquiry, and helping folks analyze their collective experiences. Here are two effective ways to structure activities:

1) Identify a period of time you want to study, or identify an issue (e.g. immigration) or institution (e.g. your workplace) that you want to understand better by knowing its history. Ask people to make individual notes of what they remember about that history. These should include memories about what was happening in the world and in their communities, as well as what was happening in the lives of their families. Ask them to post the world and community events/phenomena above the timeline, and their family events below. Ask participants to break into small groups, one for each time period, and briefly discuss what they know of the period. Then each group writes in its information. Other participants add events that have been left out.

When everyone, including the facilitator, has added as much to the timeline as they can, have participants comment on any new insights or learning from reading this history.

PREP AND PRACTICE

- What have been the shifts over time? The patterns?
- What events/changes have been most significant and why?
- How did world and community events impact families?
- What major events might happen in the next ten years?
- What major events would you like to happen in the next ten years?
- To what extent can we plan for change? Which of the changes in the timeline were controlled or controllable?

2) Timelines can be useful in looking at the history of struggle on an issue. The historical timeline is a tool that helps participants reconstruct the history of their struggle in order to see what lessons can be learned from this history and to see how forces shift over time.

Ask the group to identify a current issue or struggle that is critical to their interests. Ask them to discuss and agree on a timeframe that they'd like to examine in order to understand better how this struggle has evolved. When does it begin and end? Draw a line along newsprint and write these dates at opposite ends. The group might want to project anticipated future events as well.

As in the activity above, ask individuals to note what they know about the history of that issue. This time, however, they are focusing on the factors and events that either worked in favor of or against that struggle. They will post these above and below the timeline. Again, they'll first look for patterns:

- What do you notice about the historical forces (pro and con) that worked on this issue?
- What factors seem to be most important for moving the struggle forward? Keeping it back?
- What lessons can be learned for the future?

Pat Larson coordinates the Orange, MA site of The Literacy Project.

HANDOUT

Tips for Effective Meetings

How do you run comfortable, inclusive meetings?

- Have food at each meeting
- Do name introductions at the beginning of each meeting
- Try to have one-on-one casual conversation with each person at some point
- Make sure everyone has the opportunity to share ideas at each meeting
- Begin meetings with an icebreaker. Possibilities include:

  In groups of three, find three things you have in common that have nothing to do with being at this meeting

  Say name and something you like to do or finish one of these sentences:

  Few people know that I ______________________________
  In my next life I want to be a/an ______________________________

How do you prepare everyone well for meetings?

- Figure out the agenda items for the next meeting at the end of each meeting
- Have a notetaker (rotating, if possible) and send notes to everyone before next meeting
- Send agenda to group members prior to the meetings so they can be better prepared for the discussion
- Assign simple and doable tasks for everyone on the team
- Provide opportunities for students to report back to their classes and discuss issues in preparation for representing the group at the next meeting
- Make sure each person is responsible to present or share some piece of information at each meeting — delegate by asking for volunteers for each task

How do you conduct efficient and realistic meetings?

- Start and end on time
- Plan for the amount of time each item will realistically take to be completed
- Stick to agenda items
- Have specific and explicit goals for each meeting
- Evaluate each meeting

HANDOUT

Group Communication Patterns

Speaking up in a group can be difficult if some people's contributions are valued more than others. This activity can help a group become more aware of its communication patterns.

Who talks?

Observing who talks, how much, and to whom gives you important information about who has influence in a group. Use the following list to observe and then discuss the communication in your group:

- Who talks? For how long? How often?
- Who do people look at when they talk? (Their allies? The entire group? The floor? Etc.)
- Who interrupts whom?
- Whose comments get a response from others? Whose don't?

To gather information about who speaks to whom and how frequently, you can use an observational tool called a sociogram. To draw a sociogram, the observer first writes the names of the people in the group in a large circle. Then, as the group interacts, the observer documents their communication with symbols:

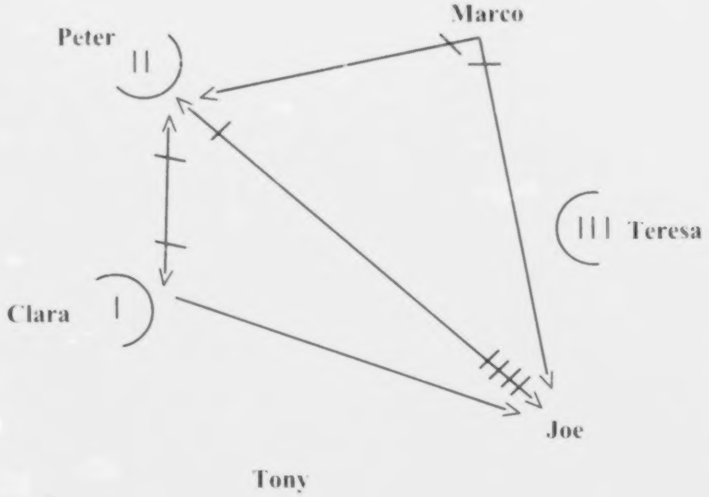
An arrow (>) indicates who is speaking to whom, and the marks on the arrow indicate the number of times.

A half-circle indicates that the speaker is speaking to the entire group. The marks inside the circle indicate the number of times.

Continued on next page

HANDOUT

Let's look at a simple example:



What do we see?

- One person (Tony) did not speak at all.
- Teresa spoke to the group 3 times; no one responded to her directly.
- Three people spoke directly to Joe, but Joe only spoke to Peter (4 times).
- Peter spoke to the group and to individuals; 3 people spoke directly to him.

What can we learn from this:

- About who has influence in the group?
- About who is encouraged to speak?
- How can a group change its communication patterns?

HANDOUT

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT DYNAMICS

PROBLEM	TYPICAL MISTAKE	EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
DOMINATION BY A HIGHLY VERBAL MEMBER	Inexperienced facilitators often try to control this person. "Excuse me, Mr. Q, do you mind if I let someone else take a turn?" Or, even worse, "Excuse me, Ms. Q, you're taking up a lot of the group's time . . ."	When one person is over-participating, everyone else is under-participating. So, focus your efforts on the passive majority. Encourage *them* to participate more. Trying to change the dominant person merely gives that person all the more attention.
GOOFING AROUND IN THE MIDST OF A DISCUSSION	It's tempting to try to "organize" people by getting into a power struggle with them. "Okay, everybody, let's get refocused." This only works when the problem isn't very serious.	*Aim for a break as soon as possible.* People have become undisciplined because they are overloaded or worn out. After a breather, they will be much better able to focus.
LOW PARTICIPATION BY THE ENTIRE GROUP	Low participation can create the impression that a lot of work is getting done in a hurry. This leads to one of the worst errors a facilitator can make: assume that silence means consent, and *do nothing* to encourage more participation.	Switch from large-group open discussion to a different format that lowers the anxiety level. Often, idea-listing is the perfect remedy. If safety is a major concern, small group activities are very important.

Reprinted with permission from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner. New Society Publishers/Canada, 1996.

HANDOUT

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT DYNAMICS

PROBLEM	TYPICAL MISTAKE	EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
TWO PEOPLE LOCKING HORNS	A lot of time can get wasted trying to "resolve a conflict" between two people who have no intention of reaching agreement. People often use one another as sparring partners, in order to clarify their own ideas.	Reach out to other members and say, "Who else has an opinion on this issue?" or, "Let's step back for a minute – are there any other issues that need to be discussed?" Remember: don't focus your attention on the dominant minority, focus on the passive majority.
ONE OR TWO SILENT MEMBERS IN A GROUP WHOSE OTHER MEMBERS PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY	"Mr. Z, you haven't talked much today. Is there anything you'd like to add?" This may work when a shy member has non-verbally indicated a wish to speak. But all too often, the quiet person feels put on the spot and withdraws further.	"I'd like to get opinions from those who haven't talked for a while." Breaking into small groups works even better. Small groups allow shy members to speak up without having to compete for "air time."
WHISPERING AND SIDE JOKES	Facilitators commonly ignore this behavior in the hope that it will go away. Sometimes it does, but it frequently gets worse.	With warmth and humor, make an appeal for decorum. "As you know, those who don't hear the joke often wonder if someone is laughing at *them*." If the problem persists, assume there's a reason. Has the topic become boring and stale? Do people need a break? Or the reverse – maybe *everyone* needs time for small group discussion.

Reprinted with permission from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner. New Society Publishers/Canada, 1996.

HANDOUT

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT DYNAMICS

PROBLEM	TYPICAL MISTAKE	EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
MINIMAL PARTICIPATION BY MEMBERS WHO DON'T FEEL INVESTED IN THE TOPIC	Act as though silence signifies agreement with what's been said. Ignore them and be thankful they're not making trouble.	Look for an opportunity to have a discussion on "What's important to me about this topic?" Have people break into small groups to begin the discussion. This gives everyone time to explore their own stake in the outcome.
POOR FOLLOW-THROUGH ON ASSIGNMENTS	Give an ineffective pep-talk. Ignore it. "We didn't really need that information anyway." Put most of the responsibility on one or two people.	Have people do assignments in teams. Build in a report-back process at a midpoint before the assignment is due. This gives anyone having trouble a chance to get help.
FAILURE TO START ON TIME AND END ON TIME	Wait for the arrival of all the "people who count." This obviously means starting late – but hey, what else can you do? When it's time to end, go overtime without asking. If anyone has to leave, they should tiptoe out.	Start when you say you're going to start. (Waiting encourages lateness.) If you must go overtime, call a break so people can "phone home." If going overtime is recurrent, improve your agenda planning.

Reprinted with permission from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner, New Society Publishers/ Canada, 1996.

HANDOUT

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT DYNAMICS

PROBLEM	TYPICAL MISTAKE	EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
QUIBBLING ABOUT TRIVIAL PROCEDURES	Lecture the group about wasting time and "spinning our wheels." Space out, doodle and think to yourself, "It's their fault we're not getting anything done."	Have the group step back from the content of the issue and talk about the process. Ask the group, "What is really going on here?"
SOMEONE BECOMES STRIDENT AND REPETITIVE	At lunch, talk behind the person's back. Tell the person-in-charge that s/he must take more control. Confront the person during a break. Then, when the meeting resumes, act surprised when his/her anxiety goes through the roof!	People repeat themselves because they don't feel heard. Summarize the person's point of view until s/he feels understood. Encourage participants to state the views of group members whose views are different from their own.
SOMEONE DISCOVERS A COMPLETELY NEW PROBLEM THAT NO ONE HAD PREVIOUSLY NOTED	Try to come up with reasons why the group would not need to focus on that issue. Pretend not to hear the person's comments.	Wake up! This may be what you've been waiting for – the doorway into a new way of thinking about the whole situation.

Reprinted with permission from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner, New Society Publishers/Canada, 1996.

HANDOUT

Balancing the Participation

The most straightforward way to overcome a group's tendency to defer to the person-in-charge is to identify the tendency and educate the group. Acknowledge that it takes courage to speak truthfully in a hierarchy. Ask people to discuss what they might say differently if the person-in-charge were not in the room. Some people will respond defensively; others will be surprisingly honest. Remember that everyone – from the boldest risk-taker to the most cautious diplomat – will need the facilitator's respect and support.

OVERCOMING A GROUP'S NATURAL TENDENCY TO DEFER TO THE PERSON-IN-CHARGE

Break into small groups for part of the discussion.

Have people write their individual thoughts on a topic first, then share them aloud.

Set aside time to criticize the ideas of the person-in-charge.

Go around the room and have everyone express their opinions.

Have the person-in-charge speak first, then ask for other perspectives.

Have the person-in-charge speak last.

Submit comments *anonymously*.

Have the person-in-charge leave the room for part of the discussion.

Use "unanimity" as the decision rule for making agreements.

Give this page to the person-in-charge.

Reprinted with permission from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner, New Society Publishers/Canada, 1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Light in Montana:

How One Town Said No to Hate

by Jo Clare Hartsig and Walter Wink

Montana, long known as "big sky" territory, is vast and beautiful, like all its northwestern neighbors. One might assume that there is room enough for everyone. Yet over the past decade the five-state area of Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana has been designated a "white homeland" for the Aryan Nation and growing numbers of kindred skinheads, Klan members, and other white supremacists. These groups have targeted nonwhites, Jews, gays, and lesbians for harassment, vandalism, and injury, which in some cases has led to murder.

In Billings, Montana (pop.83,000) there have been a number of hate crimes: desecration of a Jewish cemetery, threatening phone calls to Jewish citizens, swastikas painted on the home of an interracial couple. But it was something else that activated the people of faith and goodwill throughout the entire community.

On December 2, 1993, a brick was thrown through 5-year-old Isaac Schnitzer's bedroom window. The brick and shards of glass were strewn all over the child's bed. The reason? A menorah and other symbols of Jewish faith were stenciled on the glass as part of the family's Hanukkah celebration. The account of the incident in the *Billings Gazette* the next day reported that Isaac's mother, Tammie Schnitzer, was troubled by the advice she got from the investigating officer. He suggested that she remove the symbols. How would she explain this to her son?

Another mother in Billings was deeply touched by that question. She tried to imagine explaining to her children that they couldn't have a Christmas tree in the window or a wreath on the door because it wasn't safe. She remembered what happened when Hitler ordered the king of Denmark to force Danish Jews to wear the Star of David. The order was never carried out because the king himself and many other Danes chose to wear the yellow stars. The Nazis lost the ability to find their "enemies."

There are several dozen Jewish families in Billings. This kind of tactic could effectively deter violence if enough people got involved. So Margaret McDonald phoned her pastor, the Rev. Keith Torney at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, and asked what he thought of having Sunday school children make paper cut-out menorahs for their own windows. He got on the phone with his clergy colleagues around town, and the following week menorahs appeared in the windows of hundreds of Christian homes. Asked about the danger of this action, police chief Wayne Inman told callers, "There's greater risk in not doing it."

Five days after the brick was thrown at the Schnitzer home, the *Gazette* published a full-page drawing of a menorah, along with a general invitation to put it up. By the end of the week at least six thousand homes (some accounts estimate up to ten thousand) were decorated with menorahs.

A sporting goods store got involved by displaying "Not in our town! No hate. No violence. Peace on earth" on its large billboard. Someone shot at it. Townpeople organized a vigil outside the synagogue during Sabbath services. That same night bricks and bullets shattered windows at Central Catholic High school, where an electric marquee read "Happy Hanukkah to our Jewish Friends." The cat of a family with a menorah was killed with an arrow. Windows were broken at a United Methodist Church because of its menorah display. The car and house windows of six non-Jewish families were shattered. A note that said "Jew lover" was left on a car.

Eventually these incidents waned, but people continued in their efforts to support one another against hate crimes. After being visited at home and threatened by one of the local skinhead leaders, Tammie Schnitzer is now always accompanied by friends when she goes on her morning run. During the Passover holiday the following spring, 250 Christians joined their Jewish brothers and sisters in a traditional Seder meal. New friendships have formed, new traditions have started, and greater mutual understanding and respect have been achieved.

Last winter families all over Billings took out their menorahs to reaffirm their commitment to peace and religious tolerance. The light they shared in the community must be continuously rekindled until hate has been overcome.

Reprinted with permission from *Fellowship* (Jan/Feb 1995), published by the Fellowship for Reconciliation, an organization committed to non-violent resolution of racial and international conflict, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960 (914) 358-4601.

PREP AND PRACTICE

Stereotypes in the Media

How does the media influence our perceptions of other people? How do stereotypes prevent us from really getting to know each other?

1. Ask students to close their eyes for a moment and imagine a lawyer, then a police officer, then a doctor, then a criminal. Ask them to raise their hands if they saw either a female lawyer, an Asian American police officer, a Latino doctor, or a white criminal. Explain that stereotypes operate so subtly sometimes that we don't even notice them. Offer a definition of stereotypes: "a generalized assumption about a whole group of people based on inadequate or oversimplified facts."

2. List the following "types of people" on the board and ask students to assign each a race or nationality based on stereotypes. Have them fill in details about how each type of person dresses, how they talk, where they live, and what they value most in life.

   chemistry professor
   gang member
   hair stylist
   rap musician
   bank president
   political terrorist

3. Now ask students to imagine the rap musician matching the description of the chemistry professor or the hair stylist fitting the description of the political terrorist. Discuss why it seems easy to think in terms of stereotypes. Consider the harm done by stereotypes when they are applied to entire groups of people.

4. Ask students to name some of their favorite TV shows and the characters who either fit or contradict a common stereotype. How might their perceptions of other people be influenced by what they see on TV?

5. Have students watch a television show or movie or look through a magazine and identify any stereotypes that they see. Students may want to make a collage with the images and pictures they find. Have students write about how they feel when they see their group or another group stereotyped.

Activity adapted with permission from *Teaching Tolerance*, Fall 1994

PREP AND PRACTICE

Forming Opinions about Controversial Issues

Defining a Controversy
When a problem has two sides and people feel strongly about one side or the other, we call that problem a controversy or a controversial issue. Give examples of controversies you have discussed with other people.

Responding to Controversy
People use many different ways to figure out where they stand on controversial issues. Some just go along with what their friends think. Some use their emotions. Some people just stay out of it and let other people decide. And some people read and do research to form their own opinions. What do you do?

Researching the Controversy
Many of the more heated controversies that exist are extremely difficult to untangle without access to relevant information.

- What are good sources of information?
- Where would you go in your town to find information?
- What types of information do you think would be the most helpful? Why?

Now look at the three controversy cards on the next page, and decide as a group which one you would like to learn more about.

Here are some general steps you can follow to learn about controversies. These steps involve research, which really just means to go looking for information.

Step #1: Think about what you already know about this controversy and how people on both sides feel about it. Make a list of questions you have about the issue.

Step #2: Gather information from a variety of sources. You can divide this up so that each person in the group finds information from one place. Try to find the best arguments for each side of the controversy. Try to find answers to your questions. Write down the information so that you don't forget it.

Step #3: Review the information together. Which of your questions were answered? What new questions do you have? How has your understanding of the issue changed?

Step #4: Talk with other people about it. Listen to their views and express your views.

Adapted with permission from *Beyond Basic Skills*, Vol 2, No 2, Spring 1998 by Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin. Published by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Georgia. These activities were funded through a grant offered by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education's Office of Adult Literacy [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html]

Controversy Card #1

Should handguns be controlled by the government?

NO. The Bill of Rights guarantees Americans the right to own guns. There are many violent people in the world, and we need to be able to protect ourselves. If handguns were outlawed, only outlaws will have guns. The government should not interfere with our ability to protect ourselves.

YES. A handgun is a machine designed to kill people, and we would be better off without them. People who live in homes where there are handguns are more likely to commit suicide or be murdered than other people. Guns kept in homes are more likely to kill a family member or friend than an intruder.

Controversy Card #2

Should the U.S. use the death penalty?

NO. Life is sacred. The death penalty is a cruel and barbaric punishment. Two wrongs don't make a right, and meeting violence with violence is not the answer. It would be horrible to execute an innocent person, and we all know that human beings make mistakes. If our society needs to remove a dangerous person, we should use life imprisonment.

YES. A person who commits a violent crime must pay for it. If criminals know they might be executed, they will think twice before killing someone. Why should taxpayers pay for life imprisonment for people who commit horrible crimes? Our legal system is fair enough to decide if people are guilty or innocent. If you kill, you should lose your life.

Controversy Card #3

Should poor people get welfare?

NO. One of the things that makes America great is that people work hard to make money. No one has to be poor, and if people work hard enough, they can even get rich. Welfare programs encourage people to be lazy and weak. Unless people are unable to work because of illness or disability, they should support themselves and their families.

YES. We're the richest country in the world, and we have a responsibility to take care of people who are struggling to survive. Finding a job can be hard, and many jobs don't pay enough to take care of a family. Poor families need help to improve their situations and to give their children a chance to succeed. Our government can and should help.

Resources

Webliography

Cited References

Additional Resources

Webliography

The following is a list of web sites and resource materials available on-line for teachers interested in incorporating civic participation and social justice issues into their lessons.

American Friends Service Committee
http://www.afsc.org/default.htm
The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. The site offers news and a variety of resources on humanitarian issues.

AskERIC Lesson Plans
http://ericir.syr.edu/Virtual/Lessons/
The AskERIC Lesson Plan Collection contains more than 1,000 unique lesson plans which have been written and submitted to AskERIC by teachers from all over the United States. Lesson plans cover civics, current events, government, U.S. history and more.

Café Progressive
http://come.to/cafeprogressive
This is a one-stop connector to resources about progressive political, educational, community and global issues.

The Century Foundation
http://www.tcf.org/
The Century Foundation is a research foundation that provides analysis of major economic, political, and social issues. The site offers a variety of resources on issues such as welfare and social security reform. Myth-dispelling information about welfare can be found under "The Basics" category on this page.

The Change Agent Online
http://easternlincs.worlded.org/TEACHERS/ChangeAgent
The Change Agent, published by the New England Literacy Resource Center, provides a variety of articles and teaching resources about civic participation. Archived articles and issues can be browsed, or they can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

Civic Practices Network
http://www.cpn.org/
Born of the movement for a "new citizenship" and "civic revitalization," CPN is a collaborative and nonpartisan project dedicated to bringing practical tools for public problem solving into community and institutional settings across America. The common mission is to tell the stories of civic innovation, share the practical wisdom, and exchange the most effective tools available.

Civil Rights Museum/Highlander School
http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/it25.html
This site takes you on an interactive tour of the legal and social struggles of the civil rights movement in the United States.

CivNet
http://www.civnet.org
This is an international gateway to civic education with many teaching resources, including lesson plans that are usable or adaptable for adult education, original journal articles, civic news headlines, events listings, organizational contacts, and more. The site also features a CivTalk discussion group where educators and researchers discuss and share ideas, teaching materials, and methodology.

Close Up Foundation Online
http://www.closeup.org/home.htm
Take a virtual tour of Washington, D.C., read current news and statistics on civic interests and awareness, and view on-line civic resources.

CONGRESS.ORG
http://congress.nw.dc.us/congressorg2/main.html
Visit this web site to find legislative representatives, email or print a letter to Congress, and see how representatives are scored by various associations and advocacy groups.

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF)
http://www.crf-usa.org/
The foundation seeks to instill in the nation's youth a deeper understanding of citizenship through values expressed in our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and educate them to become active and responsible participants in our society. CRF is dedicated to assuring the country's future by investing in youth. Make sure to look at the CRF online lesson plans at http://www.crf-usa.org/lessons.html.

Contacting Congress
http://www.visi.com/juan/congress
A very up-to-date database of congressional contact information.

The Democracy Project
http://www.pbs.org/newsandviews/democracy/
The Democracy Project plans to offer a selection of on-air programming choices and an array of web sites, designed to engage, enlighten and inform U.S. citizens.

Destination Democracy
http://www.destinationdemocracy.org
A guide to money and politics. In particular, visit this site to explore campaign finance reform.

Fair
http://www.fair.org
Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) is a national media watch group that offers well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship.

How Democracy Works
http://www.democracyworks.org
Here is an online guide to the work of individuals and organizations promoting greater understanding of threats to freedom of expression and civil liberties. The Primer on How Democracy Works promotes conversation about important social and political questions facing us today based on a framework provided by the U.S. Constitution.

Immigration: A Practical Guide to Immigrating to the U.S.
http://www.shusterman.com
A very comprehensive and current immigration site created by Carl Shusterman, an attorney and former INS employee.

Immigration Forum
http://www.immigrationforum.org
The purpose of the National Immigration Forum is to embrace and uphold America's tradition as a nation of immigrants. The site offers a variety of resources about immigrants.

Institute for the Study of Civic Values
http://www.libertynet.org/edcivic/civiclit.html
This site from the Institute for the Study of Civic Values has resources about the U.S. Constitution and links to civic and political education online resources. An online discussion guide uses the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution as a framework for community planning and social contracts. There are also extensive links to sites that track the implementation of welfare reform.

Key to Community Voter Involvement
http://www.otan.dni.us/cdlp/vip/home.html
This site includes How to Vote: An Election Tutorial, The Easy Reader Voter Guide, How to be Heard and Make a Difference, and much more.

League of Women Voters
http://www.lwv.org
The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. This site includes election central and voter registration information in English and Spanish, as well as the Making Democracy Work campaign.

Literacy Link
http://litlink1.pbs.org/litteacher/peerlit/
This is the site for Peerlit, a component of Literacy Link. The site contains peer evaluations of educational web resources, including resources about "Family and Community" and "Culture and Society."

Metro-Boston Community Wide Education and Information Service (mbCWEIS)
http://www2.wgbh.org/mbcweis/
MetroBoston CWEIS acts as a single "big tent" that can accommodate the diverse information and communication needs of the grassroots community of Boston. MetroBoston is one of a number of communities across the country which are part of the Community Wide Education and Information Service. CWEIS is a national initiative designed to develop and encourage free public access to education and information on-line services using local public radio and television stations as a nucleus.

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
http://www.nnir.org/
The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues. This site contains a lot of recent and archived news, information, and alerts on immigration rights issues.

Pick Your Candidate - LESSON PLAN
http://easternlines.worlded.org/TEACHERS/PICK/index.htm
A many-faceted lesson plan that helps students to understand campaign advertising and candidate's positions so they can make educated decisions at the polls.

Political Information.com
http://www.politicalinformation.com/
A search engine for politics and policy. Allows users to search from more than 2,000 sites for news, commentary, issue sites, political interest groups, policy papers, trade associations, and political parties.

Project Vote Smart
http://www.vote-smart.org
Non-partisan voter education and information site. It contains the results of governor, congressional and state legislative races, as well as the voting records of congressmen and women on selected key issues, such as campaign finance reform. Vote Smart Classroom has resources for students and teachers including lesson plans on U.S. history and government.

Public Citizen
http://www.citizen.org/
Founded by Ralph Nader in 1971, Public Citizen is the consumer's eyes and ears in Washington. With the support of more than 150,000 people, the group fights for safer drugs and medical devices, cleaner and safer energy sources, a cleaner environment, fair trade, and a more open and democratic government.

Southern Poverty Law Center
http://www.splcenter.org
The Southern Poverty Law Center is a non-profit organization that combats hate, intolerance, and discrimination through education and litigation. This site includes readings and activities from their publication "Teaching Tolerance."

Thomas
http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.html
Provides an easy way to keep track of legislation.

United for a Fair Economy
http://www.stw.org
United for a Fair Economy is a national, independent, nonpartisan organization that puts a spotlight on the dangers of growing income, wage and wealth inequality in the United States and coordinates action to reduce the gap. UFE provides popular education resources, works with grassroots organizations, conducts research, and supports creative and legislative action to reduce inequality.

The White House
http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Welcome.html
The site offers easy access to the different branches of government and federal services. Historic national documents, daily press releases, and speeches can be downloaded.

Cited References

Anderson, Margaret, editor. *Help Increase the Peace: Program Manual.* Baltimore: American Friends Service Committee, 1999. (410) 323-7200.

Becker, Aliza. *Immigrant Rights: An ESOL Workbook.* Chicago: Travelers and Immigrants Aid, 1997.

Breast Cancer Oral History Action Project (BCOHAP). *Who Holds the Mirror? Breast Cancer, Women's Lives, and the Environment.* Available from Peppercorn Books and Press, PO 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (336) 574-1634. (BCOHAP, 1442-A Walnut, #252, Berkeley, CA 94709. (510) 841-6041)

Community in the Classroom Project: Final Report to ACBE. Knoxville: Center for Literacy Studies, 1994. (Association for Community Based Education, 1805 Florida Avenue, NW, Washington D.C. 20009)

EFF Report to the National Institute for Literacy. Knoxville: Center for Literacy Studies, July 1996. (Center for Literacy Studies, University of TN, 600 Henley Street, Knoxville, TN 37996)

Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc. *Participating in a Democracy: Choosing to Make a Difference.* Brookline, MA, 1995.

Fellowship for Reconciliation. *Fellowship.* P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960. (914) 358-4601.

Grassroots Policy Project: Introduction to Worldview. Washington, DC: Grassroots Policy Project. (202) 387-2933.

Health and Education in Adult Literacy Project. *Breast and Cervical Cancer Curriculum Sourcebook.* Boston: World Education, 1998. (HEAL Project, World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210)

Hedrick Smith Productions and South Carolina Educational Television. *The People and the Power Game.* http://www.pbs.org/powergame

Hohn, Marcia and Machado, Trish. *Running Meetings and Facilitating Groups.* Lawrence: Northeast System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), 1995. (NE SABES/Northern Essex Community College, 45 Franklin Street, Lawrence, MA 01840. (508) 688-6089)

Janks, Hilary. *Language, Identity and Power.* Witwatersrand University Press
(P.O. Wits, 2050 South Africa)

Kaner, Sam. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making.* British Columbia: New Society Publishers/Canada, 1996. (New Society Publishers, P.O. Box 189, Gabriola Island, BC Canada V0R 1X0)

Lappé, Frances Moore and DuBois, Paul Martin. *The Quickening of America: Rebuilding Our Nation, Remaking Our Lives.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1994.

Leaning, Jonathan. *Incorporating Citizen Participation Into Adult Education Curricula.* Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education, 1996. (617) 388-3300 x349.

Lutrell, Wendy. *Claiming What is Ours: An Economic Experience Workbook.* Highlander Center, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443.

McLaughlin, Patti. *Interacting with Others: An Affective Skills Curriculum.* Seattle: Adult Basic and Literacy Educators (ABLE) Network of Washington, 1994. (ABLE Network, 1701 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98122. (206) 344-4488)

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. *Focus On Basics.* Available from: Barbara Garner, World Education/NCSALL, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. (617) 482-9485.

New England Literacy Resource Center. *The Change Agent.* Available from: NELRC/World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. (617) 482-9485.

Okazawa-Rey, Margo. *Beyond Heroes and Holidays.* Washington, D.C.: Network of Educators on the Americas, 1998.

Osborne, J. *My Community.* Durham: Literacy South, 1991. Available from: Peppercorn Books, PO Box 693, Snow Camp, NC 27349. (877) 574-1634. (Literacy South, 331 West Main Street, Durham, NC 27701)

Project Hope. *Women of Strength: Four Stories From the Welfare Debate.* (617) 442-1880.

The Reading Program, Center for Civic Literacy. *How to be Heard and Make a Difference.* Santa Clara County Public Library, 1995. Available from The Reading Program (408) 262-1349 or The Center for Civic Literacy (415) 454-6500.

Ryan, Charlotte. "Battered in the Media: Mainstream News Coverage of Welfare Reform." *Radical America.* July 1996.

The Right Question Project. 2464 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 314, Cambridge, MA 02140. (617) 492-1900.

Schaeler, B. Holly. *Non Profit Organizations, Public Policy, and the Political Process: A Guide to the Internal Revenue Code and Federal Election Campaign Act.* December, 1987.

Simons, J. and Jablonski, D.M. 1990. *An Advocate's Guide to Using Data.* Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund. [http://www.childrensdefense.org]. Available from the Clearinghouse for Immigrant Education (CHINE), 100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 357-8507.

Stein, Sondra. *Equipped for the Future: A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.* Washington, D.C.: National Institute for Literacy, 1997. (National Institute for Literacy, 1775 I Street, NW, Suite 730, Washington, DC 20006. (202) 233-2025)

Survival News: a paper by and for low/no income people working to change the welfare system. 102 Anawan Avenue, West Roxbury, MA 02132. (617) 327-4219.

System for Adult Basic Education Support. *Bright Ideas.* Available from SABES/World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. (617) 482-9485.

Tacoma Community Housing Training Project. *Citizenship: A Guide to Good Teaching.* Available from Tacoma Community House, P.O. Box 5107, Tacoma, WA, 98415. (253) 383-3951.

Tasker, Debbie. *Pick Your Candidate.* Dover, NH: Dover Adult Learning Center, 1995. (603) 742-1030.

Teaching Tolerance. 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104. [http://www.teachingtolerance.org] Fax: (334) 241-0726.

Together We Bloom: Women Speaking Out Against Domestic Violence. Greenfield, MA: The Literacy Project, 1998. See page 110 for ordering information.

Valentine, Tom and Sandlin, Jenny. *Beyond Basic Skills.* The University of Georgia. (River's Crossing, 850 College Station Road, Athens, GA 30602) [http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html].

Wilson, Monty. *Conflict Resolution Skills Manual.* Philadelphia: Center for Literacy, 1993.

Additional Resources

Arnold, Rick; Burke, Bev; James, Carl; Martin, D'Arcy; Thomas, Barb. *Educating for a Change.* Co-published by Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action, 818 College Street, No. 3, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1C8, and Between the Lines, 394 Euclid Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6G 2S9, 1991.

Ayers, William; Hunt, Jean Ann; and Quinn, Therese, editors. "Welfare Workbook," in *Teaching For Social Justice.* New York: The New Press, 1998.

Bobo, K., Kendall J., and Max S. *Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990s.* New Market: Highlander Center, 1991. (1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443)

Boyd, Andrew. *The Activist Cookbook: Creative Actions For A Fair Economy.* Boston: United for a Fair Economy, 1997. (UFE, 37 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111. (617) 423-2148)

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women. *Making Connections: Literacy and EAL Curriculum from a Feminist Perspective.* Toronto, Ontario: CCLOW/CCPEF, 1996. (CCLOW/CCPEF, 47 Main Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4E 2V6. (416) 699-1909.

Confronting Violence in Our Communities: A Guide for Involving Citizens in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving. Pomfret, CT: Study Circles Resource Center, 1994. (The Study Circle Resource Center, PO Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258. (860) 928-2616).

Corporate Power and the American Dream: Toward an Economic Agenda for Working People. New York: The Labor Institute, 1995. Available from: The Labor Institute, 853 Broadway, Room 2014, New York, NY 10003. (212) 674-3322.

Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc. *A Guide to Choosing to Participate: Facing History and Ourselves.* Brookline, MA, 1998. (16 Hurd Road, Brookline, MA 02445. (617) 232-1595)

Ferreira, E.C. and Ferreira, J.C. *Making Sense of the Media: A Handbook of Popular Education Techniques.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Gonzalez, R. *Enfoque Comunitario: A Guide to Community Empowerment through Civic Participation.* Available from: National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, Nuestra Comunidad, 5800 S. Eastern Ave., Suite 365, Los Angeles, CA 90040. (213) 720-1932.

Highlander Research and Education Center. *A Very Popular Economic Education Sampler.* Available from: Highlander Center, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443.

Institute for the Study of Civic Values. *Building Community in the American Tradition.* Available from: Institute for the Study of Civic Values, 1218 Chestnut St., Room 702, Philadelphia, PA 19107. (215) 238-1434.

Kretzmann, John and McKnight, John. *Building Communities From the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets.* Evanston, IL: The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993. To order: (800) 397-2282.

Lappe, Frances Moore and Du Bois, Paul Martin. *The Quickening of America.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1994.

Lewis, Helen and Gaventa, John. *The Jellico Handbook: A Teachers Guide to Community-Based Economics.* The Economics Education Project, Highlander Center, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820. (423) 933-3443.

Martin, Rachel and Domenzain, Alejandra. *Sabemos y Podemos: Learning for Social Action.* Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, 1999. (NCLR, 111 19th St. NW Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036)

Mitchell, Elisabeth. *Citizenship: A Guide to Good Teaching.* Tacoma Community House Training Project, PO Box 5107, Tacoma, WA 98415. (253) 383-3951.

Murphy, D., Scammell, M., and Sclove, R. *Doing Community-Based Research: A Reader.* Amherst, MA: The Loka Institute, 1997. (The Loka Institute, PO Box 355, Amherst, MA 01004)

Myths and Facts (various issues). Justice for All, American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cheery Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 241-7172.

Nadeau, Denise. *Counting our Victories: Popular Education and Organizing.* BC, Canada: Repeal the Deal Productions, 1996. (Repeal the Deal Productions, c/o 707 12th Street, New Westminster, BC, Canada.)

National Issues Forum. *People and Politics: Who Should Govern?* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1992. To order: 1-800-338-5578.

North Quabbin Adult Education Center. *Getting Involved in Community Issues: Yes, You Can Make a Difference.* Orange, MA: The Literacy Project, 1997. (34 North Main Street, Orange, MA 01364-1034. (978) 544-8917)

Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice. Rethinking Schools Limited, 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212. (414) 964-9646.

Whiton, Lindy, editor. *Economic Literacy Curriculum Guidebook.* Greenfield, MA: The Literacy Project, 1998.

Appendices

Appendix A: Human Rights

Appendix B: The Economic Bill of Rights

Appendix C: The Bill of Rights for Adult Basic Education Students

Appendix D: Rhode Island Student Bill of Rights

Appendix E: When Did We Come to the U.S.?

Appendix F: Rights of All Immigrants

Appendix G: Rules on Political Activity

Appendix H: Joining Together

Appendix I: Illustrations

Appendix A

Human Rights

Listed below is an abbreviated listing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations in 1948.

Article 1: People have the right to be treated with equality.
Article 2: People have the right to be free from discrimination.
Article 3: People have the right to life, liberty, and security of person.
Article 4: People have the right to be free from slavery.
Article 5: People have the right to be free from torture and degrading punishment.
Article 6: People have the right to recognition as a person before the law.
Article 7: People have the right to equality before the law.
Article 8: People have the right to an effective remedy by a national tribunal for rights violations.
Article 9: People have the right to be free from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
Article 10: People have the right to a fair public hearing.
Article 11: People have the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.
Article 12: People have the right to be free from arbitrary interference with their privacy, home, family or correspondence.
Article 13: People have the right to free movement inside and out of any country.
Article 14: People have the right to seek and enjoy asylum in other countries from persecution.
Article 15: People have the right to a nationality and the right to change it.
Article 16: People have the right to marriage and a family.
Article 17: People have the freedom to own property.
Article 18: People have the freedom to conscience, religion, and thought.
Article 19: People have the freedom of expression and opinion.
Article 20: People have the right to assemble and associate peacefully.
Article 21: People have the freedom to participate in government and free elections.
Article 22: People have the right to social security.
Article 23: People have the right to desirable work and the freedom to join trade unions.
Article 24: People have the right to rest and leisure.
Article 25: People have the right to adequate living standards and healthy well-being.
Article 26: People have the right to an education.
Article 27: People have the freedom to participate fully in the cultural life of community.
Article 28: People have the right to a local and international social order which guarantees human rights.
Article 29: People have duties and responsibilities to the community which are essential for its development.
Article 30: People have the freedom from state, group and personal interference with these rights.

Appendix B

The Economic Bill of Rights

We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made. In our day these economic truths have become accepted as self evident. We have accepted, so to speak, a second Bill of rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all regardless of station, race, or creed. Among these are:

The right to a useful and remunerative job…;
The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation…;
The right of every family to a decent home;
The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
The right to a good education.

President Franklin Roosevelt introducing an Economic Bill of Rights, State of the Union Message to Congress, 1944.

Appendix C

The Bill of Rights for Adult Basic Education Students

1. We have the right to get the education we need. Give us the opportunity. We are **CAPABLE**.
2. Everybody should have the **OPPORTUNITY** to learn how to read and write.
3. We have the right to speak freely **WITHOUT** negative criticism.
4. We have the right to a **FULL** education. We should **NEVER BE** shortchanged.
5. We have the right to learn at our own **PACE AND STYLE**. We all learn differently. We should not be pushed aside because we might take longer or learn in a different way.
6. We have the right to be shown how to do things when needed. We are **CAPABLE**.
7. We have the right to sit on the school board and share our views and ideas. **OUR VOTES COUNT!**
8. We have the right to be treated as **EQUALS**. We are intelligent adult citizens.
9. We have the right to have our views **VALUED**.
10. We have the right to be recognized for what we **DO KNOW** and **HAVE ACCOMPLISHED**.

We the undersigned do believe these rights should be adopted by the Adult Basic Education system. We also recognize that these rights we have stated should NOT be limiting, but rather a foundation for the rights of ALL Adult Basic Education students throughout the system. We have lived by the "traditional system." It does NOT meet the needs or rights of ALL people. The saddest state of affairs is that it continues today in our school system.

This document was created on November 15, 1944 by A.B.E. students in Rutland County, Vermont, who participated in a history course called "U.S.: A Country With a Past," designed and taught by Diane L. Ray.

Janet Hurst
Alice Johnson
Helen Wagner
Helen Baird
Peter Guetti

Alice Stamper
Jodie Stone
John Stamper
Richard Gonyea
Virginia Hayes

Appendix D

Rhode Island Student Bill of Rights

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 16-63-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 63-16 entitled "Adult Education" is hereby amended to read as follows.

16-63-2. Legislative findings and policy - (a) The general assembly, in accordance with the constitution of the state, RI Const. Art XII ,1, which obligates the state "to secure to the people the advantages and opportunities of education," and also purusuant to RI Const. Art XII, 4, which requires it to "make all necessary provisions by law for carrying this article into effect," finds:

1. that all citizens, regarless of age, have the right to education;
2. that education is a lifelong pursuit;
3. that basic education and general personal development are necessary to enjoy a wholesome life; and
4. that vocational training is useful in acquiring a marketable skill and thus achieving economic self-sufficiency.

(b) The general assembly therefore declares:

1. that the public laws shall address the education needs of adults as well as of young people;
2. that an integrated and coordinated adult education delivery system shall be provided and maintained on a statewide basis; and
3. that public funds shall be appropriated to support that delivery system and thereby fulfill the constitutional mandate.

(c) All adult education programs and services provided by any department or agency of the state of Rhode Island, local government, or otherwise funded in whole or in part by state funds, shall be offered in the least restrictive environment, be designed to enhance the quality of life for adult learners, and be consistent with and inclusive of the following values that reflect the preferences and needs of adult learners:

1. Adult learners shall be treated with dignity and respect.
2. Adult learners shall be included in policy development affecting adult education.
3. Adult learners shall be offered services that are cost-effective and meet the learners needs.
4. Adult learners shall have access to testing, evaluation and requisite accommodation for learning and/or other disabilities.
5. Adult learners shall be fully informed about the educational choices available to them.
6. Adult learners shall be participate in decisions about their educational process, including information exchange and goal setting.
7. Adult learners shall be provided with educational programming commensurate with their abilities, including but not limited to basic skills, vocational education and/or secondary education or its recognized equivalent.
8. Adult learners shall receive consistent, sustained quality in their education.
9. Adult learners shall not be denied access ancillary services such as transportation and childcare which are necessary to support their educational programs.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

Appendix E

When Did We Come to the U.S.?

	Native Americans were in the United States for thousands of years before the first Europeans.
1600s	There were no immigration laws. Most immigrants who lived in the thirteen colonies were Protestants from England. Many people from Spain went to what is now the southwest. Thousands of Black Africans were captured and brought to the U.S. as slaves, against their will.
1700-1798	More than 450,000 immigrants arrived from Europe. The thirteen colonies became the United States Congress passed a law in 1798 that gave the President power to imprison immigrants who criticized the government and deport dangerous immigrants.
1815-1890	Fifteen million immigrants arrived mostly from the Northern and Western European countries. About 300,000 Chinese came between 1850 and 1882. In 1848 Mexicans living in areas that are now Texas, Arizona, and California found themselves living in the United States when these territories were annexed by the United States after the Mexican-American War.
1882	The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. Chinese people were not allowed to continue to immigrate to the U.S.. Chinese in the U.S. could not become U.S. citizens. Most Asian people could not legally immigrate to the U.S. until 1965.
1890-1924	Twenty million immigrants came mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe. 1900 to 1920 was the highest decade of immigration in U.S. history. Nine million immigrants arrived. Many were poor.
1900-1960	Additional Mexicans and people from the Caribbean started to come to the U.S.. Mexicans, who had lived mostly in Texas, Arizona, and California, began to settle in other states, such as Illinois. Most people from the Caribbean lived in New York, Boston, and Miami.
1921-1960	In 1921, Congress passed a law that ended most immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Many people had anti-immigrant feelings. For the next forty years only nine million immigrants came to the U.S.. Some were refugees from World War II and communism.
1965	Congress passed a new immigration law that allowed the same number of immigrants from every country in the world to come to the U.S.. Legal immigrants and U.S. citizens could sponsor their family members from other countries to live in the U.S..
1975-1988	As a result of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, 706,000 refugees arrived from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

1980-1990	Over 8 million immigrants came to the U.S. between 1980 and 1990. This is the second highest decade of immigration in U.S. history. The majority came from Latin America and Asia. There were also many refugees from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
1986	The U.S. passed an amnesty law. It helped nearly two million undocumented people, mostly Mexicans, become legal residents. It also makes employers who hire people without legal documents pay a fine.
1988 - now	Congress began to pass laws that make it easier for the government to deport non-citizens, reduce benefits for non-citizens, and make it harder to become a permanent resident or a U.S. citizen.

Working Together

Complete these activities with your classmates.

1. Make a timeline of the important events in U.S. immigration history.
2. When did people begin to come to the U.S. from different parts of the world?
3. Make a timeline of the years your classmates arrived in the U.S.
4. What happened after the two highest decades of immigration?

Reprinted with permission from *Immigrant Rights: An ESOL Workbook*, by Aliza Becker, Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Chicago, IL 1997

Appendix F

Rights of All Immigrants

All people in the U.S. have certain rights. It does not matter if you are a U.S. citizen, a permanent resident or undocumented. What are these rights?

Public school
Public elementary and high school education is available and required for all school age children.

Emergency
Any hospital emergency room, critical care unit, or intensive care unit cannot deny treatment for a very serious medical problem.

Immunizations
Free vaccinations are available for diseases such as tuberculosis, tetanus, and polio.

Testing and Treatment for Symptoms of Communicable Diseases
Free or low-cost testing and some treatment is available for infectious diseases such as AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, measles, tuberculosis, leprosy, diphtheria, and scarlet fever.

Nutrition Programs
Poor people have the right to free school breakfast and lunch; soup kitchens, community food banks, and other nutrition programs for adults and families.

Violence Prevention Programs
Counseling, advocacy, support groups and training on gangs, domestic violence, child abuse, and similar crises cannot be denied because of your immigration status.

Short-term Shelter and Housing
If there is space at a battered women's shelter or homeless shelter, you cannot be turned away because of your legal status. All immigrants can also receive housing during a natural disaster (hurricane, floods).

Most Rights Guaranteed under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
This includes the right to practice whatever religion you want and to gather together with other people peacefully to request changes in the government. If you are arrested for a crime, you have the right to remain silent, get a free lawyer, talk to a lawyer before you answer any questions, and have a lawyer with you while you answer any questions.

All Rights in National and State Labor Law
This includes the right for most workers to receive at least minimum wage.

Most services in government-funded clinics are free or low-cost for poor people. What other rights do legal residents have? What rights do only U.S. citizens have?

Reprinted with permission from *Immigrant Rights: An ESOL Workbook*, by Aliza Becker. Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Chicago, IL, 1997

Appendix G

Rules on Political Activity

A 501(c)(3) organization is strictly forbidden from engaging in any political activity on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Unlike the limitation on lobbying activities, the prohibition on political activity is absolute. Violation of this prohibition may result in revocation of tax-exempt status and imposition on excise tax on both the organization and the organization's managers. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between political activities that are prohibited and voter education and registration activities that a 501(c)(3) organization may conduct even during an election year.

Determining What is Political Activity

Political activity is participation or intervention in any election campaign in support of or in opposition to a candidate for local, state, or national public office. A 501(c)(3) organization's activities may not directly or indirectly benefit a candidate. Determining whether a proposed activity is a "political activity" is difficult, but certain activities are clearly prohibited:

a. Formal or informal endorsements of a candidate for public office. A candidate for public office is any person who offers or is proposed by others to run for elective public office. Note that the definition of candidate under the IRC is broad. Thus, recruiting an individual to run for public office, or supporting an individual before he or she officially registers as a candidate during the exploratory state is political activity. The prohibition extends to candidates running for nonpartisan offices as well as political party office. Work on behalf of or against a person seeking an appointment to public office is not prohibited.

b. Direct financial contributions or other support to a candidate, political party, or political action committee (PAC). A contribution to a political party constitutes indirect support for candidates and an expenditure to influence voter preference.

c. In-kind contributions to a candidate, political party, or PAC including but not limited to:
   - mailing, membership, or donor lists or other resources for fundraising;
   - provision of facilities or office space;
   - staff time;
   - organizing volunteers for a campaign; and
   - opposition research.

d. Publication or distribution by a 501 (c)(3) organization of statements in favor of or in opposition to a candidate.

e. Rating candidates for their qualification for particular office.

This list is by no means comprehensive, but it provides examples of political activities which are strictly prohibited. As a general rule, the IRS' principal concern is the use of an organization's resources. A 501(c)(3) organization is prohibited from employing any resources (including funds, facilities, lists, staff) to influence voter preference or the outcome of an election.

Penalties

The penalty imposed on a 501(c)(3) organization for engaging in any of these political activities may be a revocation of tax-exempt status by the IRS and the imposition of a substantial excise tax on both the organization and its managers. Under section 4945 of the IRC, the IRS may impose on the organization a tax equal to 10 percent of the amount of the political expenditure. A tax equal to two percent of the expenditure may be imposed on any organization manager who agrees to make the expenditure, unless the agreement is not willful or is due to reasonable cause. Additional taxes may be imposed on both the organization and the managers if the expenditure previously taxed is not corrected within the taxable period.

Permissible Voter Education and Registration Activities

Nonpartisan voter education and registration activities are not prohibited and provide valuable contributions to public understanding of and debate about key issues. In planning and implementing such activities, it is essential to stay within the guidelines outlined below in order to avoid straying into the restricted arena of "political" activity. The IRS has taken the position in certain rulings that a program that is largely educational in nature may be deemed impermissible political activity if even one part of the activity is "political." Due to the many uncertainties in the rules governing 501(c)(3) voter education activity, it is quite possible to inadvertently cross the line.

General Guidelines for Voter Education and Registration Activities

These guidelines apply to the planning and conduct of all voter education and registration activities.

Partisan statements of candidate political party preference are prohibited. No support or opposition to a candidate or political party may appear in written or oral statements. This restriction includes not only communications or publications which are distributed or made available as part of the project, but also, for example, buttons, bumper stickers, or T-shirts with political preferences, worn or displayed by staff or volunteers during the implementation of a project.

Voter education projects may not be designed or targeted to influence voter acceptance or rejection of a candidate. For example, targeting media ads or literature distribution in a particular voting district to directly or indirectly assist or oppose a candidate or influence the outcome of an election is not permitted. Indications of such targeting would include focusing on swing areas in a voting district. This restriction does not prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from conducting voter education activities during an election year. However, extra precautions should be taken to avoid the appearance of political activity.

Coordination of activity with a candidate's campaign or a political party is prohibited. Clearly, if an organization is coordinating a candidate debate or issue briefing, discussions with campaign staff or the candidate are not prohibited. Any cooperation which is intended to benefit a candidate or influence voter preference is restricted.

All materials and publications associated with voter education activities should include a disclaimer stating that the information or activity is in no way intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate or political party. A disclaimer assists in avoiding the appearance that a voter education activity might be a restricted political activity.

Reprinted with permission from *Non Profit Organizations, Public Policy, and the Political Process: A Guide to the Internal Revenue Code and Federal Election Campaign Act*, by B. Holly Schaeler, December, 1987. Sponsored by Citizens Vote, Inc. Prepared by Perkins Cole in consultation with Harmon & Weiss.

Appendix H

Joining Together

Carl Washington believes that we can solve the problems that plague our communities by joining together. A high school student in a small town in Idaho made a similar discovery after overhearing a number of adults make racist remarks at a football game.

Ernest "Neto" Villareal lives in a community where he and other Latinos are considered outsiders. For much of his childhood, Neto, like many of his friends, got into almost daily fights with white students. For Neto, however, the fighting ended when he made the high school football team. Playing on the team gave him a sense of belonging. It made him feel that he was a valued part of the community. On Friday nights, hundreds of people from miles around would pile into trucks, cars, and vans to watch him and the others play.

Then one evening after a difficult game, Jesse Paz, a teammate and friend, asked Neto if he ever got tired of listening to white fans hurl racist remarks at the Latino players. Neto told him that he never paid much attention to what the fans said. He was too busy concentrating on the game. Although Neto seemed to shrug off Jesse's comment, it bothered him. He later told writer Phillip Hoose:

> The next game, I decided to see if I could hear what Jesse was hearing. In one play, we were running a pass pattern that ended up very near the Marsing cheering section. Our receiver, who was Hispanic, dove for the ball and missed it. Suddenly I could hear voices in our crowd saying, "Get that stupid Mexican off of there! Put a white player! G-D those f—— Mexicans!" I looked up. Most of the voices belonged to parents. One was a guy on the school board.
>
> All game long I kept listening. When a white player would drop a pass, they'd go, "Nice try." But they were always negative toward us. Our whole race. I guess I had been blocking it out. Jesse was right. We couldn't just ignore it anymore.

After the game, Neto and Jesse called a meeting of all of the players — white and Hispanic. The two boys repeated what they had heard and told their teammates that they could not ignore the remarks. After discussing the issue at great length, the entire team decided to sit out the next game to show their disapproval of the fans' racist comments.

Before heading home, Neto, Jesse, and another teammate told the coach what the team had decided and turned in their uniforms. The coach told the boys that they had made the wrong choice. People would call them losers and quitters. Later that evening, as Neto thought about the events of the day, he realized that the coach was partly right. It wasn't enough just to quit. He and the others had to let the community know why they were quitting. But how could they be heard? Neto decided to ask Andy Percifield, the president of the student council, for advice. Although Neto didn't know him, friends who did spoke highly of him.

When Andy heard the story, he immediately offered to help the players. He began by asking the principal for his support in responding to the remarks. To his surprise, the principal insisted that Neto was mistaken. After all, he told Andy, he had never heard anyone call the Latino players names. Andy left angry and frustrated.

Neto also had a difficult day. His teammates were having second thoughts about the decision they had made the night before. One by one, most of the boys decided to play, including many of the Hispanic players. In the end, only four players – Jesse, Neto, Rigo Delgudillo, and Johnny Garcia – remained committed to staying off the field until the fans changed their behavior.

That afternoon Neto decided to seek advice from a teacher named Baldimar Elizondo. Elizondo told Neto that he had to tell the school board about the racist remarks. Unless members of the board knew exactly why he was protesting, they could ignore the protest or find another explanation for it. That evening Neto, accompanied by Elizondo, told members why he was quitting the team. He later recalled that only one man seemed to really listen. Still when he finished, the members thanked him for coming even though they did not respond to his charges.

Andy Percifield was also busy. The next morning, he announced two meetings over the school's intercom system. The first was a student council meeting. Attendance was required. The second was a meeting of all students. Attendance was encouraged. Andy told both groups about the racist remarks at the games and explained how some members of the team had decided to respond to those remarks. He then read aloud a letter that he wanted to distribute at the next game. A number of students suggested ways it might be improved. Andy then asked for and received their unanimous approval to read the edited version at half-time. The letter stated:

> We, the student body of Marsing High School are appalled by the racist behavior of certain people in the audience. Not only does this set a bad example for some younger students, it also reflects very badly on our entire school and community.
>
> Although we appreciate the support of our fans for our team, which is composed of students from many ethnic backgrounds, we do not need bigots here.
>
> We are asking the authorities to eject from the premises anyone making such rude and racist remarks.

After the meeting, Andy showed the letter to the striking players and asked if they would be willing to play if it were read to the crowd. The four agreed. Andy then took the letter to the principal and asked permission to have it read at the game. When the principal refused, Andy decided to show the letter to the superintendent of schools, his principal's boss. Baldimare Elizondo went with him. After the superintendent heard the story and read the letter, he told Andy that he was proud of him and the other students. He even volunteered to read the letter at the game. Andy thanked him for the offer but turned it down. He and the other students wanted to handle the matter themselves.

On the day of the game, several students distributed copies of the letter to everyone who entered the stadium. Then at half-time, a member of the student council went to the microphone and asked for everyone's attention. She then read the letter to a silent crowd. In his book *It's Our World, Too!* Phillip Hoose describes the effects of the incident:

> Since that letter was read, there have been no more racial slurs from the Marsing Husky fans, at least none loud enough for the players to hear. Neto and Andy know that they and Jesse and Rigo and Johnny didn't do away with racial prejudice in their town. Many white parents still won't let their sons and daughters date Hispanics, and the two groups still don't mix much outside of school. But they also know that they did what no one before them had done. "At least," says Nero, "we made it known that we wouldn't accept racism in our school or from our fans. We made a difference in the part of our lives that we really could control."

Reprinted with permission from *Participating in a Democracy: Choosing to Make a Difference*. Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc. Brookline, MA. 1995

Appendix I

SHELTER 4 ALL
WEL-COME ALL
Dear Senator, The homeless in my city need help. Please give your support to fund shelters.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

193

Welcome
Mr. Candidate!
Facilitator
Welcomer
AGENDA
1. Welcome
2. Listen
3. Questions
Question 2
Question 1

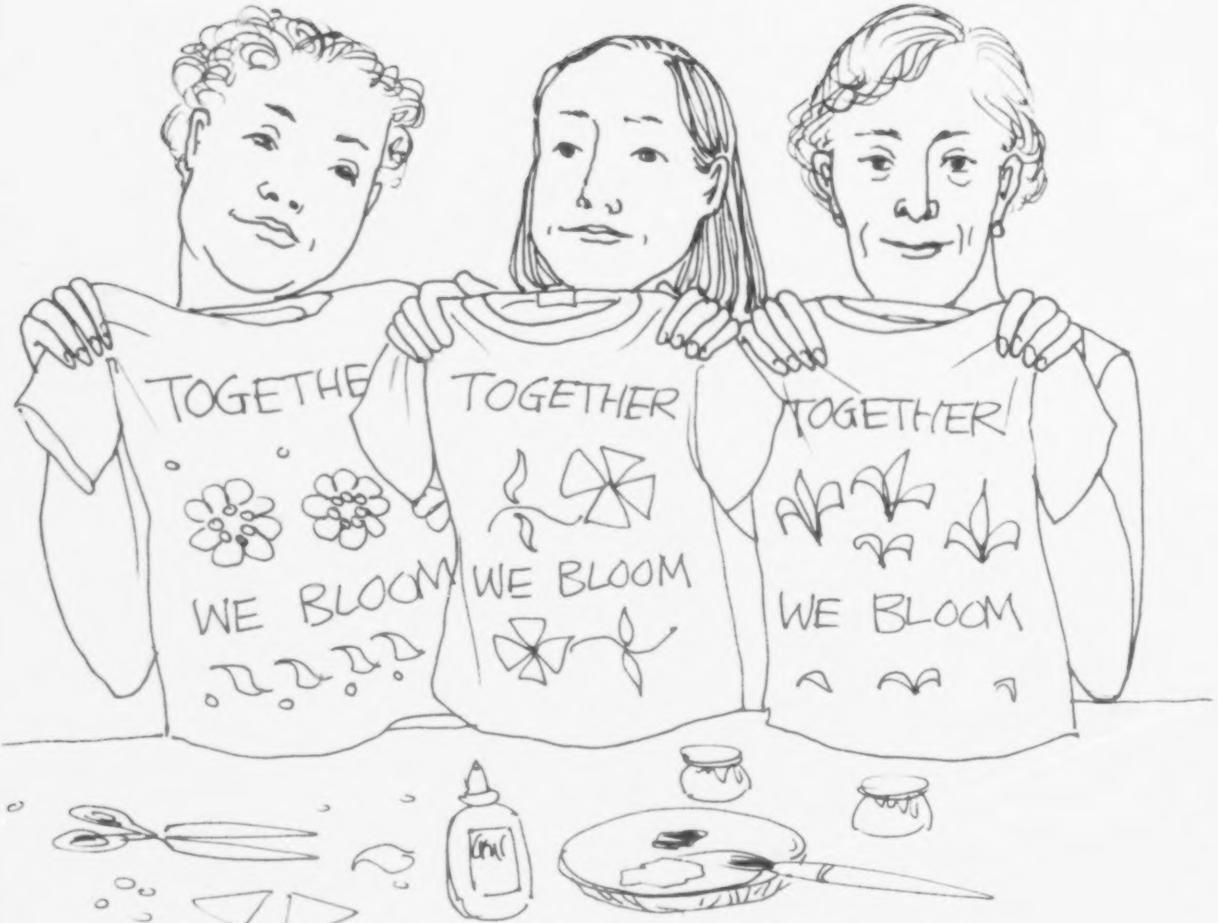
CLINIC

STUDENT HEALTH
DRUG/ ALCOHOL COUNSELOR
THINK
DON'T DRINK
AND DRIVE

FURNITURE
SALE
724-2310
TABLES
CHAIRS
BEDS

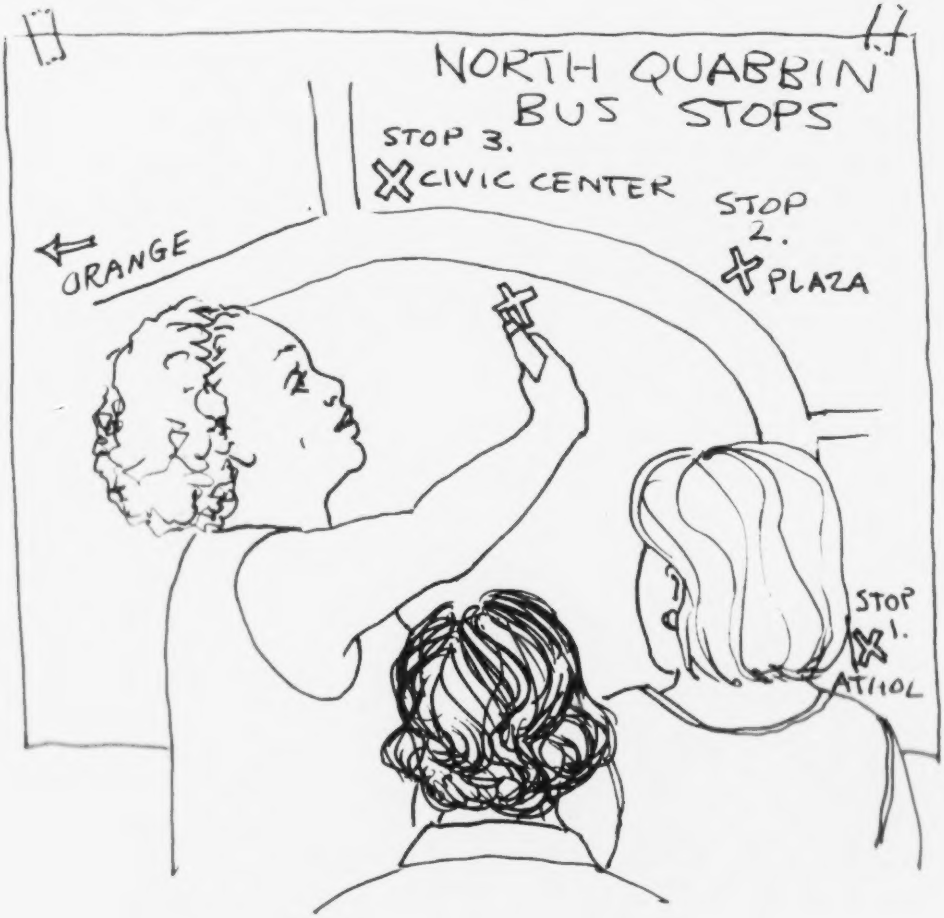
sty
Cone 75
Special!

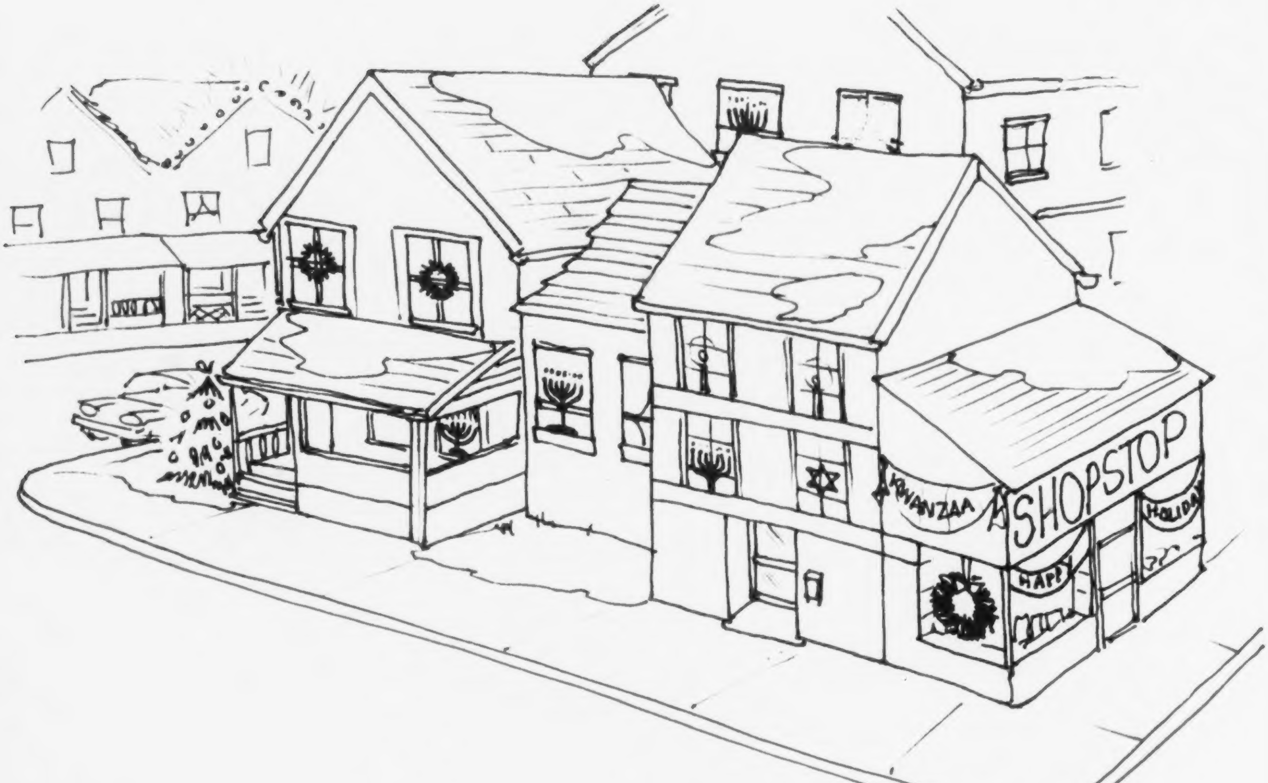
AIDS
?
AIDS


TOGETHER
WE BLOOM
TOGETHER
WE BLOOM
TOGETHER
WE BLOOM
GLUE

WELFARE TO TRAINING TO WORK
FIRST EDUCATION THEN JOBS!
SUPPORT JOB TRAINING BILL

SCHOOL BUS


NORTH QUABBIN
BUS STOPS
STOP 3.
CIVIC CENTER
STOP 2.
PLAZA
ORANGE
STOP 1.
ATHOL


KWANZAA
SHOPSTOP
HAPPY
HOLIDAY